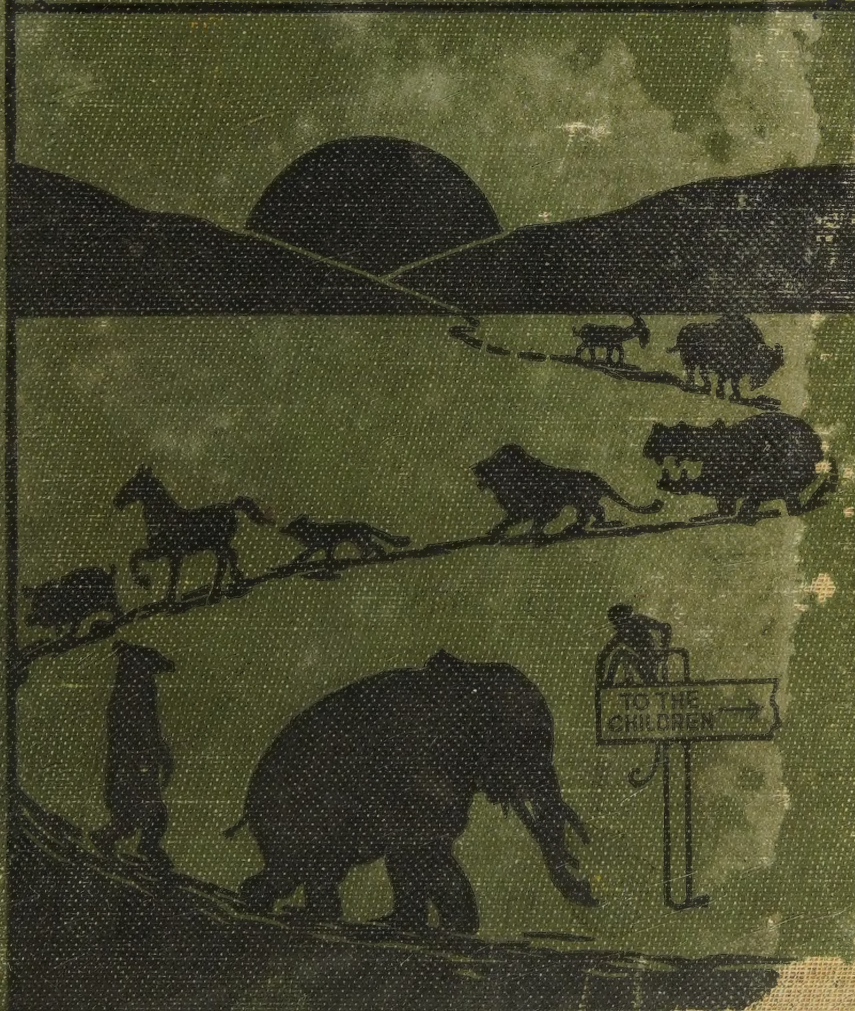


KNEETIME ANIMAL STORIES

BLACKIE

A LOST CAT





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Under a wagon, between the legs of a horse and under an automobile sprang the black cat. After her ran the red-haired boy.

(Page 75) Frontispiece

Kneetime Animal Stories

BLACKIE
A LOST CAT
HER MANY ADVENTURES

BY
RICHARD BARNUM

Author of "Squinty, the Comical Pig," "Tum Tum, the
Jolly Elephant," "Dido, the Dancing Bear,"
"Flop Ear, the Funny Rabbit," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
WALTER S. ROGERS



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Blackie, A Lost Cat

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BLACKIE, A LOST CAT

CHAPTER I

BLACKIE HEARS SOMETHING

BLACKIE was a cat. Now that I have told you this much I think you can guess why that was her name. It was because she was as black as a coal, or a bit of tar from the barrel which stood on the street when the men were fixing the roof. Blackie did not have so much as a speck, or a single hair, of white in her glossy coat of fur, and on a dark night, if you were to look for Blackie I think you would not have found her. For she looked just like a bit of the dark itself.

When you first looked at Blackie you might have thought she was just like other cats, but she was not. She was a very smart cat, and so many things happened to her, and she had so many adventures, that I am going to tell you about them.

Once upon a time, not so very many years ago, Blackie lived in a fine large house with a little boy and girl, named Arthur and Mabel. Of course the papa and mamma of Arthur and Mabel lived in the house too, but as the children were the ones who played with Blackie, and looked after her, giving her milk and good things to eat, it seems best to say that Blackie lived with them.

"Now it's your turn to feed Blackie," Mabel would call to her brother.

"All right," Arthur would answer. "I'll get her the milk right away."

The children never had to be told twice to look after their pet cat, for they loved Blackie very much. Though the children's father or mother often had to tell them twice, or perhaps even three times, to go to the store, or run on an errand, just one telling was enough when it was about Blackie.

"I certainly have a good home here," thought the black cat, "and Arthur and Mabel are very kind to me. Yes, I certainly am a lucky cat."

Of course Blackie did not say this out loud, for neither cats, nor dogs, nor other animals, can speak as we do. But they can make noises, such as mewling or barking, and I think that is, for them, talking in their own way, just as much as we talk in ours.

'And cats and other animals think, too, I believe. Else how would they know enough to come to the same place many times to be fed, or how would they know how to find their way home when they have gone far off?

Of course cats and dogs often get lost, for they may go so far that they can not find the way back again. So you might say, from that, I suppose, that cats can't think. But then did *you* never get lost? Yes, I'm sure you must have, at least once. And you can think, I know, but you could not find your way home alone.

I know cats and dogs think, and that they can talk to one another, too, in their own language. So it isn't at all strange that Blackie should think about what a good home she had, and how kind the little boy and girl were to her.

"Now, Blackie," said Mabel one day, as she got ready for school, "be a good cat to-day, and don't run off."

"Put the red ribbon with the bell around her neck," said Arthur as he gathered up his school books. "Then if Blackie goes away we can listen for the bell and find her."

"Oh, yes! That's what I'll do," said Mabel. "Here, Blackie!" called the little girl, "come and have your ribbon put on."

There was a pretty red ribbon for Blackie's neck, and it always looked nice on the cat,

because black and red seem to go well together. I think they "match" as the ladies say, though I don't know much about such things. I know when a team of horses match, and go well together, and when two dogs, or two cats, are well matched, but I am afraid I can't tell much about ribbons and such things matching.

Anyhow a lady told me black and red matched, or went well together, and I guess she is right. And I know that the red ribbon looked very pretty on Blackie's neck, for I saw it there myself.

"There!" exclaimed Mabel, as she tied the ribbon into a pretty bow. "Now you won't get lost, Blackie, and when I come home from school I'll find you here."

Blackie lifted one velvety paw, and shook her head. This made the little brass bell tinkle.

"You can hear that a good way off," said Arthur. "When I come home from school I'm going to try to teach Blackie the trick of standing in the corner."

"She can do one trick now," said Mabel. "She can jump through my hands, when I hold them in front of her like a hoop."

"Can she?" asked Arthur. "Let's see her do it."

"Children! Don't be late for school," called their mother from the dining room.

"No, we won't, Mother," answered Mabel. "I am just going to have Blackie do one trick. Come here, Blackie!"

Blackie always came when the little boy or girl called her, for the black cat knew she would be petted, or given something nice to eat each time. This time Mabel stroked Blackie's soft fur, and then put the cat down in front of her, behind her arms which she held in a round ring.

"Jump through, Blackie!" called Mabel, and Blackie did.

"See!" said the little girl to her brother. "Didn't Blackie do that trick nicely?"

"She surely did!" exclaimed Arthur. "And when I come home from school I'll teach her to stand on her hind legs in a corner."

"Come now, children, run along!" called the mother, and Arthur and Mabel, having each patted Blackie once more, hurried off to school.

"Well, I think now I will go and take a little sleep," said Blackie to herself. "Then I will go out and see if I can find another cat to play with until the children come home."

For Blackie loved to play, and she was sometimes lonesome when the children were not home.

Mabel had made a little cushion for Blackie, and this cushion was kept in one corner of the

dining room, where the sun shone a good part of the day. Blackie liked to sleep in the sun.

"Yes, I certainly am a lucky cat," thought Blackie, "to have such a nice home, and such a good little girl and boy to pet me. I have a nice red ribbon, too, and a bell. Not many cats have things as nice as I."

Blackie was sure of this, for a number of times she had seen, on the back fence, other cats, whose fur was all scraggly and rough; who looked poor and thin and who seemed scared almost to death. Once Blackie had spoken to one of these cats and the cat had told Blackie how hungry he was.

"Why don't you go home and eat?" asked Blackie.

"Home? I have no home!" sadly exclaimed the strange cat. "I had one once but the people moved away, leaving me behind, and since then I have eaten as best I can. You are very lucky to have such a nice home. Excuse me, I see a piece of meat!" And with that the strange cat jumped down off the fence and grabbed a bit of meat out of the ash can.

"I'm glad I don't have to eat that way," thought Blackie.

As Blackie went to sleep on the soft cushion she thought of the time when she had been a little kitten, and had lived with her mother, and

her brothers and sisters, in a barn in the country. For Blackie's early days were spent on a farm, though she did not now remember very much about that part of it.

Arthur and Mabel's father and mother had taken the children on a visit to the farm, and it was there the children saw the black cat, which they liked very much. So the farmer gave her to them, and they named her Blackie and brought her home to the city with them.

Since then Blackie had lived in the fine house with her little master and mistress, and, as I say, she had a very easy time of it, never wanting for anything to eat, or for a warm, cozy place to sleep.

For several hours Blackie slept on the cushion, now and then turning around to get more in the sunlight, and when she did this the little brass bell on the red ribbon on her neck would go "tinkle-inkle."

"Well, I think I'll take a walk out in the yard, and perhaps I may see another cat to talk to," said Blackie, as she awakened and stretched first one leg, and then the other, opening her mouth as wide as she could to stretch that too. Blackie was a bit lonesome without the children.

Out in the yard went the black cat. The sun was shining down through the leaves of the grape vine, making dancing shadows on the walk

below. Blackie pretended that these shadows were mice, and that she was chasing them. As she was doing this the black cat heard a voice calling to her.

"What are you doing?" the voice asked.

Blackie looked up, and saw another cat looking at her over the back fence. This cat was mixed gray and white in color.

"Oh, I'm just having a little game by myself," answered Blackie. "I do this to amuse myself when the children are at school, and I am alone. Excuse me, but I think you must be a strange cat around here."

"I am," meowed the other. "My folks have just moved in the house next door."

"I saw loads of furniture going in there yesterday," said Blackie, "but I did not see you."

"No, I was shut up in a box," the new cat said. "They were afraid I would get lost, I guess. They kept me down cellar until a little while ago."

"Oh, that's too bad!" exclaimed Blackie. "I guess you are glad to be out again; aren't you?"

"Indeed I am! But they kept me down cellar so I would not be hurt when the furniture was being set around, I guess."

"Won't you come over and have a game of shadow tag?" asked the black cat. "My name is Blackie," she went on.

"And mine is Speckle," said the other. "I suppose you are called Blackie because you are so black."

"Yes," answered Blackie, "and I think you must be called Speckle because you are speckled gray and white."

"That's it," Speckle answered, as he jumped down off the fence.

Then the two cats had a nice time playing shadow tag under the grape arbor. After a bit, as they lay down to rest on the grass, Speckle asked: "Did you ever run away?"

"Run away!" exclaimed Blackie. "What's that?"

"Why, don't you know?" went on Speckle in some surprise. "To run away is to leave your home, and go off to have adventures."

"What are adventures?" Blackie wanted to know.

"Oh, things that happen to you," replied Speckle.

"Did you ever run away and have adventures?" Blackie wanted to know.

"Indeed I did," Speckle said, somewhat proudly. "I have run away more than once, and many things happened to me. It was fun, only I got hungry sometimes."

"How do you run away?" asked Blackie.

"Why, you just run," Speckle said. "You

walk out of the house, just as if you were going out in the yard to play as we did now, and, when no one is looking, you walk off down the street as far as you like."

"Oh, I thought you said *run!*" exclaimed Blackie. "Now you are talking about *walking* away."

"It's all the same thing," Speckle explained. "You can't run *all* the time you are running away; you have to walk part of the time or you would get very tired. You just try it some day."

"Perhaps I shall," Blackie said. "I'll think about it. I have certainly learned something to-day. Arthur spoke about teaching me a new trick when he came home from school, but I have learned something all by myself, and that is how to run away. I believe I'll try it!"

"Do," said Speckle. "Let me know when you are going and perhaps I'll go with you. Excuse me!" said the mixed-color cat, "but I hear them calling me. I guess my dinner is ready," and with that the other cat jumped back over the fence.

CHAPTER II

BLACKIE RUNS AWAY.

“**T**HAT cat is a good jumper,” thought Blackie when her new friend had gone. “He went over that fence easily. I wonder if I could do it?”

Blackie tried, but she could not jump all the way to the top of the fence as Speckle had done.

“I suppose it must be because he ran away once or twice,” thought Blackie, as she again went back to rest in the shade, after having tried two or three times to leap to the top of the fence in one jump.

“It must be that running away makes one a good jumper. Yes, I certainly must run away, or walk away, as Speckle called it. I wonder what would happen to me? I suppose Mabel and Arthur would miss me, and I would miss them. But I need not run very far away, and, and I can run back when I want to.”

Blackie did not know much about things outside of her own nice home, you see. Running away never made a cat a good jumper that I ever heard of, though some cats, who have no

homes, learn to jump fences easily because, I suppose, they are chased by dogs or boys so often that they just have to know how to make big jumps.

"Yes, I certainly must try what running away will teach me," thought Blackie as she went in the house where, near the stove in the kitchen, set her saucer of milk. "Then I will have things to tell Speckle when I come back. I must ask him more about it the next time I see him."

That afternoon, just before Arthur and Mabel came home from school, Blackie saw Speckle out on the fence again.

"Wait a minute, Speckle!" called the black cat. "I want to ask you about running away," and she hurried out in the yard.

"Oh, I'm not going to run away for some time," said the other cat. "I've just moved here and I want to see what sort of a place it is before I run away. Perhaps I shan't run away at all. Anyhow I shall not for a long time. I never run away until I get tired of a place, and then I don't often stay away more than a day or so."

"Oh, I wasn't going to ask you to run away," said Blackie. "But I want to know if running away makes a cat a good fence-jumper?"

Speckle thought for a few seconds and then said, slowly:

"Well, yes, I suppose it does. I know the first

time I ran away I could not jump very well. And then a dog chased me. I ran into a yard, and in front of me was a fence. The only chance to get out of the dog's way was by jumping the fence. I had never jumped so high a fence before, but I did that time, and the dog could not get me, so I got away."

"My gracious!" exclaimed Blackie. "Something happened to you that time! Was that an adventure?"

"Yes," answered Speckle, thinking a moment, "I suppose you could call that an adventure. But I had many more after that."

"Do dogs always chase you when you run away?" Blackie wanted to know.

"Oh, no, not always," answered the gray cat. "But that is one of the things that may happen when you run away."

"I shan't like that part of it," spoke Blackie. "There is a dog in the house on the other side of ours, and the family that lived in the house into which your folks just moved also kept one. He used to chase me until I scratched his nose with my sharp claws one day, and after that he let me alone. I was sorry to scratch him, but it was the only thing to do."

"Yes, of course," agreed Speckle. "It is a good thing we have sharp claws. They are especially for scratching dogs that chase us."

"I wonder if there is any other way of scaring a dog besides scratching him?" asked Blackie.

"Perhaps there may be," said Speckle.

"It would be nice if there was. I may learn how to do that if I run away to look for adventures."

"Oh, so you are going to run away; are you, Blackie?"

"Well, I'm thinking of it. Will you come?"

"Not right away—at least I think I will not," said the other cat. "Still you might call over the fence to me when you go, and perhaps I'll come along. Hello, who are they?" asked Speckle quickly as he saw a boy and girl coming in the yard.

"Oh, that's Arthur and Mabel, my little master and mistress," explained Blackie, but Speckle did not stop to listen. With a jump he was on top of the fence.

"Excuse me!" called the gray cat to Blackie, "but that boy looks just like one who once tied a tin can to my tail!"

"The idea!" meowed Blackie. "Arthur is a good boy, and loves cats. He'd never do anything like that to me, nor to you or any other animal."

"You never can tell," said Speckle. "Safety first, as I hear they are teaching the children in school. I'll just stay on my side of the fence

until I see what kind of a boy he is," and though Blackie kept saying that Arthur was a good boy, and would not plague cats, Speckle would not stay.

Of course Mabel and her brother did not understand what their cat said to the other one, for they did not know animal language, though Blackie and other cats know what boys and girls say to them, or a great deal of it, I think.

"Did you see that strange cat?" asked Mabel of her brother.

"Yes, I guess it belongs to the folks next door," spoke Arthur. "Now I am going to teach Blackie to stand on her hind legs."

Arthur picked Blackie up, and rubbed her under the ears. Cats like to be rubbed under the ears, and they will purr if you do it to them. And when a cat purrs it shows it is happy.

Just why cats like to be rubbed, or tickled, under the ears I do not know, any more than I know why a pig likes to be scratched on his back. I only know that this is so. A hoptoad likes to be scratched on his back, also. Many a time I have gone quietly up to a toad in the grass, and, with a little twig, have scratched his back. And Mr. Toad will sit there quietly, and will puff himself out like a little balloon, because he is so pleased to have his back scratched. But you

must do it very gently." And poll parrots like to have their heads rubbed. But don't ask me why, for I don't know.

Anyhow Arthur rubbed Blackie under her ears, and the black cat liked it and purred in the boy's arms.

"And now for your trick, Blackie," said Arthur.

It is not easy to teach a cat to stand on her hind legs, as Arthur very soon found out. Cats do not learn tricks as easily as dogs do, though I have seen performing cats on the stage of a theater. They climbed ladders, walked a tight rope, and did many other little tricks.

Blackie did not know exactly what Arthur wanted her to do. The little boy put the black cat in a corner, so she could lean her back against the sides of the room, and not fall over. Then he lifted her front feet off the floor so that she was resting on her hind ones.

"Now stand up that way!" Arthur said, speaking kindly.

Blackie did it, for a few seconds, and then she got down on all four feet as she was in the habit of standing.

"No! Not that!" said Arthur, lifting her up again. "Stand on your hind legs, Blackie."

But Blackie did not do it very well.

"Let me try," said Mabel, who was watching



"Now jump through my hands, Blackie!" called Mabel.

her brother. "She will jump through my hands, and perhaps she will stand up for me."

"I'll try once more," said Arthur, "and then you may have a turn, Mabel."

But neither Arthur nor his sister could make Blackie stand up on her hind legs. Blackie just did not want to do it, or perhaps she could not.

"Maybe when I come back, after having run away, I'll do it for them," thought the black cat, as she rubbed up against Mabel's legs.

"Now jump through my hands, Blackie!" called Mabel, and she made a loop of her arms in front of Blackie. This trick the black cat knew very well.

"If she would only do the standing on her hind legs trick as well as she does yours she would be a fine cat," Arthur said.

"Blackie is a nice cat anyhow, and I love her," spoke Mabel, cuddling the cat in her arms.

That night, when the children were studying their lessons, Blackie lay on a soft cushion at their feet, purring happily. And, all the while, the black cat was thinking about running away.

"I suppose Mabel and Arthur will feel badly at first," thought Blackie, "but I won't be away very long, at least not the first time. I think I'll run off to-morrow."

The next day came, and after breakfast, when Arthur and Mabel had gone to school,

Blackie went out in the yard. She had made up her mind to run away, and she wanted to see if Speckle might not like to go along.

Blackie did not have to pack up any clothes, or take anything to eat with her, when she started to run away. Cats can't do those things. The only clothes they need is their coat of fur, and that is always with them. I have seen dogs with little blankets on, and even a sort of overcoat, but cats are different and do not wear them.

And Blackie could not take with her anything to eat. She thought she would have no trouble in picking up what she wanted as she went along.

"I may even stop in a house some day, and get milk," the black cat said to herself.

Out in the yard she went, close to the fence.

"Meow!" called Blackie to Speckle. "Come on out; I want to speak to you."

"What is it?" asked the gray cat, sticking his head up over the fence.

"I'm going to run away," answered Blackie. "Don't you want to come along?"

"My goodness! Run away!" exclaimed Speckle. "So you have made up your mind, have you?"

"Yes, I'm going. Will you come?"

"Hum! No, I think not," Speckle said slowly. "I don't believe I'll run away to-day. You see I have hardly gotten to know all the cats around

here yet. I'll wait a while. But don't let me keep you from running if you really want to go."

"Yes, I do want to go," Blackie said. "Perhaps when I come back I may be able to jump a fence as well as you, and I may do the standing on my hind legs trick that Arthur tried to teach me."

"Perhaps," said Speckle. "Well, good luck to you!"

"Thank you," answered Blackie. Then she looked toward the house. No one was watching her. Blackie went slowly down the front walk to the street.

"I don't need to run at first," she thought. "I'll begin to run when I get out of sight of the house. The children can't see me, for they are at school, and I am glad of it, as they might cry if they saw me going. But I'll soon be back, only I can't tell them so."

Blackie went slowly to the front gate. She went out in the street. Then she went slowly down the sidewalk, and when she was out of sight of her house she began to run.

"Now," said Blackie to herself, "at last I am really running away!"

CHAPTER III

BLACKIE IN TROUBLE

BLACKIE soon grew tired of running, and slowed down into a walk.

"It doesn't really matter much what I do, as long as I keep on going away," thought the black cat. "I can walk or run, so Speckle said, and he ought to know, for he has run away a number of times."

Blackie walked on and on, down the city street. Soon she came to a corner, and she stood there a moment, looking up and down, wondering which way she had better go. She had come past many houses, and had passed many persons in the street, mostly women and men, for all the children were at school. No one did more than look at Blackie, for all were too busy, I suppose.

As Blackie stood on the corner she saw a cat on the porch of a house near by. Blackie knew this cat a little, for once the cat, whose name was Muffins, had come walking in Blackie's yard.

And, once or twice, Blackie had been as far

as this corner herself. So she knew Muffins a little.

"Hello, Blackie!" meowed Muffins. "You're quite a stranger. I haven't seen you in some time. Where are you going?"

"I'm running away," answered Blackie.

"Running away! You surprise me," cried the other cat. "What is the matter? Did they treat you badly at your home? Didn't they give you enough to eat?"

"Oh, yes, plenty," said the black cat. "And they treated me very kindly, too."

"Then why in the world are you running away?" Muffins wanted to know.

"I want to have some adventures, as Speckle did."

"What are adventures, and who is Speckle?" asked Muffins.

"Adventures are things that happen to you," replied Blackie, "and you never can have them happen as long as you are around the house. You have to run away to get them. That's why I'm running away. And Speckle is the cat who lives next door to me."

"I don't know him," spoke Muffins.

"He just moved there," went on Blackie, "and he was only just let up out of the cellar."

"Hum!" said Muffins. "Well, run away if you like, but, as for me, I can find plenty of

adventures around the house. Why, only a little while ago, the cook dropped a bottle of cream and spilled it on the kitchen floor. I was there and I licked up all the cream. Oh, it was good! I'd invite you in to have some, only it's all gone now. That *was* an adventure, I can tell you!"

"Yes, cream is good," said Blackie, "but I don't call that an adventure."

"No?" asked Muffins. "Then, pray tell me, what is an adventure?"

"Oh, when a dog chases you and makes you jump a higher fence than you ever before leaped over," said Blackie. "That is an adventure."

"Yes, I should say so," agreed Muffins. "It's a kind I shouldn't like. I'd rather have our cook drop another bottle of cream."

"Oh, well, of course *all* adventures that come to you when you have run away aren't dog-chasing ones," said Blackie. "I only spoke of that one because Speckle told me. I really never had any adventures myself so I can't tell you about them. But, anyhow, I am running away. Would you like to come along?" asked Blackie politely of Muffins.

"No, I thank you. I'm going to stay here. Home is good enough for me. But where are you going to run to, if I may ask?"

"Oh, not any special place," answered the black cat. "I am just going to run, that's all."

"What? And not know where you're going? That's queer. I should think if you ran away you'd have to have a place to run to."

"Not at all," said Blackie. "Speckle ran away many times, and he never said anything about going to any special place."

Muffins shook her head.

"It doesn't seem right," she said. "I'd want to know where I was going, even if I ran away."

"That's part of the adventure, not knowing where you're going," said Blackie. "Now I can go up the street, or down the street, just as I please. If I had picked out a place to run to I'd have to go there whether I wanted to or not. No, it's best to run away just as Speckle did, and then see what happens. So you won't come with me?"

"Thank you, no."

"Then I must go alone, I suppose. Well, when I come back I will tell you all my adventures," Blackie promised.

"Yes, do," invited Muffins. "I shall like to hear about them, even if I can not go myself."

Then the two cats said good-by, in cat-talk, and Blackie turned down the side street. She had never been there before. It was like going to a new world for her, or as when you children visit or board at a new place in the country, or at the seashore, on your vacation.

"Now my adventures will begin!" thought the black cat.

She went slowly along the street, keeping close to the fences, for this street was a bigger one, and busier than that on which Blackie lived. There were trolley cars on it, and many wagons, also.

Once Blackie saw a boy going along with a basket on his arm. From the basket came a lovely smell of meat, and, what Blackie liked best of all, liver. She ran toward the boy with the basket, thinking he might give her a bit, as Arthur often did.

But when the butcher-boy saw the cat he cried: "Scat!" and looked around for a stone to throw.

"My, you're awfully stingy with your meat," thought Blackie, as she ran behind a tree so the boy could not hit her. "I don't see why you wouldn't give me a bit."

But of course the meat in the basket was for the family that had bought it, and the boy could not give any away. If Blackie had gone to the butcher shop the man there might have given her a bit of liver.

"Scat! Scoot!" cried the boy, as he ran up to the tree, and he made a hissing noise through his teeth. Blackie was afraid he would hurt her, so she climbed up the tree as fast as she could,

knowing quite well how to do that with her sharp claws.

"Ha! Go up a tree, will you?" cried the boy. "If I had time I'd make you come down! Trying to get my meat! The idea!"

"Oh, I never tried to get any of his meat!" thought Blackie, for she heard what the butcher-boy said. "But you might have given me a little."

However, Blackie was now safely up the tree, and she stayed there until the boy went off whistling down the street. Blackie was about to come down when she happened to see a dog on the ground below. The dog did not look to be a kind and gentle one.

"I guess I'll just stay up here until he is gone," Blackie said to herself. "Safety first!"

The dog sniffed around the tree a little and then, as he saw another dog down the street, ran away.

"Now is my chance," thought Blackie, and down she came, running along close to the fence as she had done before.

"Well, that was two little adventures," the black cat said after a while, "being chased by a butcher-boy up a tree, and seeing a dog under me. Though I suppose Speckle would not think much of them. Still I may have other things happen to me. I must keep on."

By this time Blackie was getting hungry and thirsty, so she looked around for something to eat. She saw no nice saucer of milk, as she would have seen had she been at home, for one can't find saucers of milk in the street. Nor was there any nice liver, or bit of fish, lying around.

"Still one can't have everything one wants when one runs away," Blackie said.

The cat came to a fountain in a little park, and there she drank some water. But before she had finished along came a dog, and chased her away. Blackie ran into the bushes.

"Oh, dear!" she thought, her heart beating very fast. "Running away isn't as nice as I thought it would be. Still it may be nicer later on."

Farther on down the street walked Blackie, looking from side to side for something to eat. But though she passed butcher and grocery stores she did not feel like going in and mewing to show that she wanted to eat.

"I ought to have asked Speckle what he did for food when he ran away," thought Blackie. "I forgot about it. I may find something soon."

A little later Blackie passed a house the door of which was open.

"That looks inviting," thought the black cat. "I am sure kind people must live there, or they would not leave a door open for cats or dogs to

go in. I'll go in, and maybe they'll give me something to eat."

Blackie looked all around, to make sure there were no dogs about, and then she went up the front steps. In through the front door of the house she went, and then she saw something that surprised her. There was no furniture in the house, and no one was in sight.

"Nobody lives here," said Blackie. "But perhaps they are just going to move in, as Speckle's folks did. I'll wait a bit. That's what must be going to happen. They had the door open to bring in the furniture.' When the people come they'll give me some milk, I'm sure."

Blackie walked through the empty rooms of the house. She went out to the kitchen, and no one was there. Then she went up to the second floor, and no one was there.

While up on the second floor Blackie heard the front door being shut with a bang.

"Oh, perhaps that's the folks moving in," she mewed. "I'll run down and see."

Down the stairs scampered the black cat, but there was no one in the house. The front door was shut, and Blackie, of course, could not open it. I once had a cat that could open a door with a latch on. This door, however, had a knob, and Blackie could not turn that.

"Well, I wonder what happened?" thought

Blackie. "Perhaps the wind blew the door shut."

She jumped up on a window sill and looked out. She saw a man going down the front steps of the house.

"He must have shut the door," thought Blackie, and the man had. He owned the house, and he had come that day to see if it had been cleaned when the people moved out. He had opened the door, gone in and looked about. When he came out, to look around the back yard, he left the front door open. It was then that Blackie went in. Then the man, not seeing the cat in his house, shut the door, locking Blackie in, and he went away.

"Well, if I can't get out the front door I'll go to the back," said Blackie. She ran to the back door. That was locked too, and all the windows were closed.

"Oh, dear!" thought Blackie. "I guess I'm in trouble. I'm locked in an empty house!"

CHAPTER IV.

BLACKIE GETS OUT

BLACKIE was quite a wise cat in her way. When she had been a little kitten in the country, with her mother, her brothers and sisters, she had learned many country things, such as all cats must learn. And when she had been brought to the city she learned some city things. So you see she had been educated, you might say, to country life and city life.

"But what I am going to do now I don't know," thought Blackie. "Here I am, locked in a house that has no one in it, though maybe if I wait long enough a new family may move in. But if they don't come very soon I'll starve, unless I can get out. It's a good thing it is summer, for I won't get cold. The weather is nice and warm."

Blackie walked slowly through the different rooms of the empty house. She thought perhaps she might find a window open, though when she had first looked she saw none.

"But there might be a pantry, or a cupboard, with an open window," thought the black cat. "I might not have seen it at first."

So she went carefully all over the first floor. Not a window was open. The man who owned the house had made sure all were closed, for he did not want the rain to come in during a storm. So there was no way Blackie could get out from the first floor.

Of course she might have jumped against a pane of glass and broken it, for she was a heavy cat. But if she did that she might cut herself.

"Well, if I can't find a window open down here, I may find one open upstairs," thought Blackie. "I guess it wouldn't be too far to jump from there. Or I may be able to jump in a tree and climb down, if a tree is near enough to an open window."

Blackie went upstairs and looked for an open window. But alas! there was none. True, the black cat did find a tree growing close to a window, but there was no way of getting out in it.

"Oh, dear!" thought poor Blackie. "I certainly am in a lot of trouble. I should never have gone in this house without knowing more about it. I suppose I should not have run away. But no, I must not say that. I want to become a good fence-jumper, and running away seems to be the only way to do it. I guess I'll be all right. Some one may come and let me out."

Blackie was not so frightened as another cat might have been who had not lived in both the

country and the city. She knew how to think, and she remembered how she had once been shut in the barn before she was taken away from the farm.

That time Blackie had been locked up a whole day and a night, but finally some one heard her mewling and let her out. And oh! how hungry and thirsty she had been!

"I guess I'll try crying now," thought Blackie. "Some one may hear me out in the street."

Blackie did not mean that she was going to "cry" real tears, but that she was going to mew. Some folks call that crying for a cat.

"Yes, that's what I'll do," said Blackie to herself. "I'll get up on the window sill, and mew as loudly as I can."

Up jumped Blackie to the sill of the window and, looking out in the street, she opened her mouth and let out a loud:

"Mew!"

"They ought to hear that," thought the black cat. But no one seemed to hear her. She could see people passing along the street, boys and girls being among them, for school was now out. But though once in a while some one did look at the cat in the window, no one came to let Blackie out.

"Oh, if only Arthur or Mabel would pass along the street on their way from school, they

might let me out," thought Blackie. "I wonder if this is the street by which they come home?"

This was something Blackie could not tell, smart as she was. She could only hope, and call, which last she did every minute or two.

But every one on the street seemed to be in a great hurry. Men and women walked quickly past, with only a glance, now and then, at the black cat in the window. Perhaps they did not stop to think that it was strange for a cat to be alone in an empty huose. Perhaps the people did not even stop to think that the house was empty. And they might have thought that if Blackie got in the house she could also get out.

But she could not, as we know, for every door and window was tightly fastened. And another thing was that only the man who owned the house had a key to it. So if any one did try to let Blackie out how could they do it? Blackie did not know all this though. She just knew that she wanted to be let out, and so she kept on mewling.

"Well, this doesn't seem to be doing any good," thought Blackie at last. "I'm only wasting my time crying this way, and making myself tired, too. Oh! how thirsty I am! I'd like even a good drink of water, though of course milk would be much better. :

"Still I must not find fault. I ran away on

purpose and I must put up with what I meet with. I should have asked Speckle how he found things to eat and drink when he ran away. But I forgot all about that. I wish he had come with me, for he would know what to do now. And I guess he would not have let me come in this house to get locked up.

"Oh, well, it isn't night yet, and before dark some one may come. That man whom I saw going away may come back. I'll just wait a bit."

So Blackie waited and waited, but no one came. It was late afternoon now, and the shadows were getting longer and longer, as the sun went farther and farther down in the west. No more children passed the house, for they were all home from school now, and were playing their games, and having fun.

"I guess Mabel and Arthur are playing, too," thought Blackie. "I wonder if they miss me?"

The two children did indeed look for the black cat when they came home from school, but not finding her they thought little about it at the time.

"I guess she has gone over to play with the cat next door," said Arthur.

"I guess so, too," said his sister. "Come on down the street and we'll play with the Blake children. Tommie Blake asked me to come over after school."

So Arthur and Mabel ran off to play, not thinking any more about Blackie for a while, though afterwards, when she did not come home, the children did not know what to think, and they looked all over for their pet.

But this story is just about Blackie, and not so much about Arthur or Mabel, though I may mention them once in a while. Now I must tell you what happened to the black cat.

She wandered all over the house once more, now and then jumping up on a window sill that fronted on the street, to give her mewling cry. But if any one heard her no one tried to get her out of the locked and vacant house.

“I must do something. I really must!” said Blackie to herself at last. “Otherwise I shall have to stay in this house all night with nothing to eat. I’ll go upstairs again and see if there is something to eat up there. The family may have left something when they moved out.”

Upstairs went Blackie once more, and she hurried through the different rooms, for it was getting dusk now. Not a thing to eat could poor Blackie find.

At last she came to another flight of stairs that seemed to lead up to the roof.

“Why, that’s queer,” said the black cat. “I did not notice them before. I wonder what they are for? I must go up and find out.”

Blackie walked up these other stairs. They were narrow and quite steep, and when the cat reached the top she could look up and see the sky through a crack.

"Ha! This isn't so bad," thought Blackie. "Perhaps I can squeeze through that crack and get out. I'll try."

Blackie went up to the highest step. Over her head was a square piece of wood that seemed to cover a hole in the roof. The wood was really a cover to what is called a "scuttle," or hole, in the roof of the house, which roof was flat, and of tin.

When the men built the house, which was in a long row with many others, they left a hole in the roof, with stairs leading to it, so when the roof needed painting, or mending, men could get out on it without bringing ladders and putting them against the building on the outside. Then so the rain would not come in through the hole, the men made a cover for it.

This cover could be lifted up, whenever any one wanted to get out on the roof, and the cover could be fastened down, by hooks inside, when the hole was to be closed.

But now, as it happened, the cover was only partly over the hole, and it was not fastened down. There was a little crack, as when a door is only partly closed, and Blackie put her nose

to this crack. She could sniff the fresh air.

"Oh, how good that smells!" she said. "If I could only get out!"

Blackie again put her nose in the crack, and, bracing her legs on the top step, she began to push with her head. Blackie was a strong cat, as I have said, and soon she began to feel the cover slipping and moving to one side.

"Oh, I believe I can push it away from over the hole!" said Blackie. "If I do I can get out! I must push harder!"

Blackie pushed as hard as she could and the scuttle cover moved more. The crack was wider now. Blackie could put out one paw. Soon she had pushed the cover far enough away so she could put out two paws.

"I'll soon have it all the way off now!" thought the black cat.

She gave one more hard shove and then, to her delight, the cover slid away from the hole. There was room for Blackie to jump out.

She found herself on the flat tin roof of the house. On either side were the tin roofs of other houses in the brick row. It was like one long, big roof.

"Well, I'm out, anyhow!" said Blackie to herself. "That is something. It's an adventure, a real, truly adventure! I wonder what will happen to me next?"

CHAPTER V

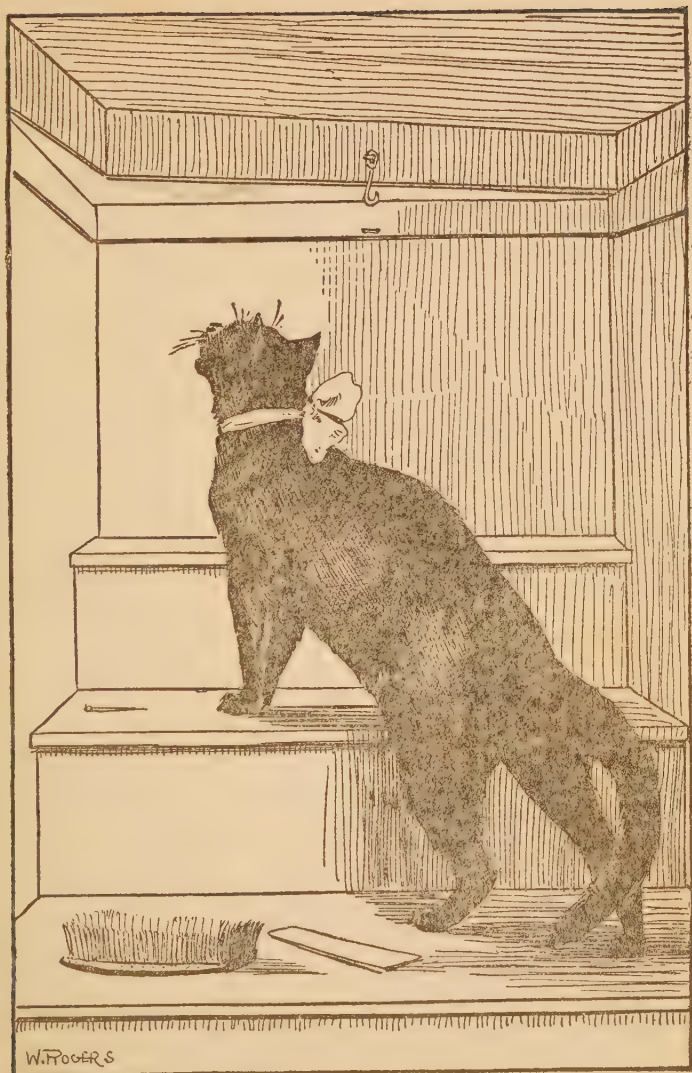
BLACKIE FINDS A FRIEND

BLACKIE was now out of the vacant house, it is true, but, for a time, she did not feel much better off. She was up on a high roof, and as she went to the edge to look down she saw that it was too far for her to jump, even down into a tree.

“As soon as I get through with one adventure I find another,” sadly said Blackie. “I had an empty-house adventure, and now I am having a roof adventure. I wonder how it will end? I must get down some way. I can’t stay up here all night, for it might rain, and I don’t like to get wet.”

Cats do dislike getting wet, you know. They are not like dogs in that way. A dog loves to jump in the water and swim, or at least most dogs do. But you never saw a cat in swimming—at least I never did.

Blackie walked up and down the roof for a while. She could look down to the street from in front, and she saw persons walking along, as well as many wagons, automobiles and trolley



When Blackie reached the top she could look up and see the sky through a crack.

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cars. Blackie gave two or three loud mews, but she soon stopped.

"There is so much noise down there in the street, and I am up here so high, that I don't believe they can hear me," thought the black cat. "I may as well keep still."

Then she went to the other side of the roof, to where she could look down in the back yards of the houses. She saw no one there, in any of them, and after she had mewed several times she also gave that up.

"Oh, dear!" thought Blackie. "I don't know what I shall do. Suppose it rains during the night? Well, of course I could go down in the empty house again, so I would be dry, anyhow. But I want something to eat. Oh, dear! Running away, even to learn how to jump high fences, is not half as nice as I thought it would be. Speckle did not tell me I would have bad adventures. I thought they would all be nice ones."

Blackie walked over toward one of the end houses in the row. She was wondering what she would do, when, all at once, another and the same kind of a scuttle cover as the one she had pushed to one side, was opened in the roof in front of her, and up popped the head of a gray-haired lady, who had a kind, pleasant face, and who looked at Blackie through large spectacles.

"Why, it's a cat—I do believe!" exclaimed the lady, whose name, as Blackie learned later, was Mrs. Thompson. "I was wondering what was making that noise, walking around on the roof. I'm glad I came up to see. It's a cat!"

"Of course I'm a cat," said Blackie to herself. "I hope I don't look like a dog."

Of course Mrs. Thompson did not hear Blackie say this, for the cat only thought it to herself, just as we often think things without speaking them out loud.

"What a fine big black cat!" went on Mrs. Thompson. "Come to me, pussy! How did you get up here?"

"Pur-r-r-r-r!" said Blackie out loud. That, and mewling, was the only way she had of talking to real folks. But to those who understand, cats can say several things in just those two ways. Sometimes you can tell by the way a cat mews, whether it is hungry, or whether it wants to go out doors. And when it cries in another way you know it is in pain. And when it says "pur-r-r-r-r!" like that, sort of softly and slowly, and rubs up against you, why then you know the cat is happy.

Blackie was beginning to feel happy again, for she saw the lady looking out through the hole in the roof, and the black cat thought the lady would take her down and feed her.

"Why, you're a nice cat," said the lady, speaking to Blackie in a way the cat liked. "You certainly are a nice pussy. I wonder how you got up on this roof?"

Then, as she rubbed Blackie under the cat's ears, in a way Blackie liked, the lady looked along the roofs, and she saw on the roof the cover, or scuttle, which Blackie had pushed to one side to get out.

"Oh, I see! That's how you got up here, through the hole in the roof," said the lady. "Well, I must close it, or the rain might come in Mr. Smith's house. I see how it is. The family there moved out, and you were left behind, Blackie. It's too bad they forgot you. But never mind, I'll take care of you."

Of course Mrs. Thompson was not right in thinking Blackie had been left behind by the family that had moved away. But Mrs. Thompson did not know that Blackie had run away, and had wandered in the vacant house by herself. And Blackie could not tell.

"Now I'll just close that scuttle over the roof for Mr. Smith," went on Mrs. Thompson. "He doesn't know it is open, I dare say. Then, after that, I'll take you down in my house, Blackie."

You might wonder how the lady knew Blackie's name, never having seen her before.

But when a cat is all black, as this one was, it seems natural for every one who meets her for the first time to call her Blackie.

"Just a minute now, Blackie," said Mrs. Thompson. "Then I'll give you something to eat. I know you're hungry."

Blackie was mewling her hungry cry, and the lady knew enough about cats to know it.

"I'll give you some nice milk, and a bit of meat in a minute," the lady went on. "Just wait until I close Mr. Smith's scuttle."

She climbed out on the roof to do this, and Blackie rubbed against her skirts and purred. Blackie had found a new friend.

"Go on down my stairs now," said Mrs. Thompson as she walked back to the hole in her roof, followed by Blackie. "Go on down and then I'll close my scuttle, and get your supper and my own too."

Blackie knew enough to run down. She waited at the foot of the stairs while Mrs. Thompson fastened her scuttle with hooks, and then Blackie waited for the lady to go ahead and show the way.

Blackie found herself in a house just like the empty one she had first entered, but some one lived here, for there was furniture in all the rooms, and carpets on the floors. In the other house the floors were of bare boards.

"Come on down to the kitchen," invited Mrs. Thompson. "I'll feed you there." •

Blackie understood this talk, and how she did hurry to that kitchen, for she was very hungry! The lady poured out a saucer of nice milk, and you can just imagine how fast Blackie put her red tongue in it to lap it up, for she was thirsty as well as hungry, and milk to a cat is both food and drink.✓

When the saucer was empty the lady brought Blackie some bits of chicken, left over from dinner.

"Now then, let me see you eat that," said Mrs. Thompson. She talked to Blackie almost as if the black cat were a real person and could understand. I know many men and women who do that. I do it myself to my pets. I know they don't understand *all* I say, but I like to think that they do.

Mrs. Thompson lived all alone in her house, and when a lady lives alone, and has a cat, a dog, a bird, or a parrot, she gets in the habit of talking to her pets.

"Yes, you are a nice cat," went on Mrs. Thompson, as she once more stroked Blackie's smooth fur. "You came from a good home, I can tell that, and why the folks moved away, and left you behind, I can't see. I'll keep you for a while, and perhaps they may remember about

you and come to get you. If they don't come I'll take you to the country with me, for I will soon be going there."

After her meal Blackie washed herself carefully, as her mother had taught her to do. Then she curled up in a black ball at the feet of the kind lady.

It was now dark, and the lady lighted the gas.

"I'm glad I didn't have to stay up on the roof, or in the vacant house all night," thought Blackie, purring away and beginning to feel a bit sleepy. "My running away is turning out all right after all. I am in a nice house, though I may not stay. I have not run far enough away yet. I must go a bit farther before I go back to Arthur and Mabel."

The old lady sat reading, now and then speaking to Blackie, who answered with a purr.

"I once had a white cat," said the lady, "but you are just as nice, though you are black. I shall keep you a long time, I hope."

Presently the door bell rang. Up jumped the nice old lady.

"Some one to see me!" she exclaimed. "Perhaps it is some one who has come after Blackie."

She went to the front door, and Blackie waited.

"I wonder if that can be Arthur or Mabel after me?" thought the black cat.

CHAPTER VI

BLACKIE IN A BASKET

BLACKIE, who had walked from the sitting room, where the old lady had been reading, out toward the hall, heard voices as the front door was opened.

"Come in," invited Mrs. Thompson.

"I just thought I'd step over to see how you were," spoke a strange voice.

"That isn't Arthur or Mabel," thought Blackie, for she knew the voices of the children.

"I thought perhaps you might be lonesome," said the visitor.

"Well, I *was* lonesome," said Mrs. Thompson, "but, a little while ago I heard something up on the roof. I went up, opened the scuttle and what do you think I found?"

"Not a baby! Don't tell me it was a baby!" exclaimed the other voice, which was that of a lady.

"No, it *wasn't* a baby," spoke Mrs. Thompson, with a laugh, "so of course I'll not tell you it *was*. Come in the sitting room and see."

"Oh, what a fine big black cat!" cried the

other lady, leaning over to pet Blackie. "Where *did* you get her? Oh, *isn't* she a beauty!"

"That's what I found up on the roof," explained Mrs. Thompson. "It was the cat I heard walking around, and I brought her down to my house with me."

"How did she get on the roof?" asked the other lady.

"Why she got out through that vacant house where the family lived that moved away. I don't know their name, as they did not stay in this block long. But they must have left the cat behind, and she made her way up to the roof."

"No, I don't believe those people had a cat," said the other lady. "So I don't believe they left this one behind. I would have known if they had a cat, for they lived right across the street from me. This cat must have come from somewhere else."

"Of course I did," said Blackie to herself, as she listened to this talk. "I ran away from a good home, but I think I have found one almost as nice, though I shall miss the children. But I don't know how long I shall stay here. I may run away farther. I wish I could tell these nice ladies some of my adventures. But of course I can't, for they don't understand my language very well."

The two ladies talked more about the black

cat, wondering where she had come from, and all that, and, every once in a while one of them would lean over and pet Blackie.

"I wonder if she will let me hold her in my lap?" said the lady who had come to pay an evening visit to Mrs. Thompson. "I hope she will, for I love cats."

"Try it," said Mrs. Thompson. "Blackie seems very nice and gentle."

The other lady picked Blackie up.

"My! How heavy she is!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, she is a big cat," spoke Mrs. Thompson.

Blackie was very willing to be held in the lady's lap, for Arthur and Mabel often petted Blackie that way. The lady stroked Blackie's fur and rubbed her ears, and, as the cat liked that, she purred.

"This is the nice part of my adventures," thought Blackie to herself. "I guess I rather like running away after all. But perhaps something else will happen in the morning."

"I won't go back home, at least not for a day or two, and by then I may have many more things to tell Speckle. Maybe he will not think getting locked in a vacant house much of an adventure. I must have more exciting ones than that to tell about."

The two ladies talked for some time longer,

taking turns patting Blackie, until it was time for the lady visitor to go home.

"Good night!" she said to Mrs. Thompson. "I shall come over often to see your new cat. I hope you can keep her, and that no one comes to take her away."

"So do I, though of course I would give her to whoever owned her. If I had a nice cat I wouldn't want any one to keep her from me," Mrs. Thompson said.

"No, I wouldn't either. Well, good night. Oh, when do you go to the country?"

"In a few days now, I think."

"And will you take Blackie with you?"

"I will if no one comes for her before I go."

Then the two ladies said good night again (ladies always say it three or four times, somehow or other) and then Mrs. Thompson locked the front door.

"It will soon be time to go to bed, Blackie," said the lady. "I will get out the cushion my white cat used to sleep on, and you can use that."

Blackie wondered what had become of the white cat who used to live with the kind old lady. Mrs. Thompson brought out the other cat's cushion. It was nice and soft, and Blackie liked it.

In the morning Blackie, who had slept well, was given a good breakfast of milk and oatmeal.

Mrs. Thompson seemed to know just what cats like.

“I wonder if you would run away if I let you out in the yard for a while?” spoke the lady, looking at Blackie. “It is not good for cats, or other animals, to stay in the house all the while, especially in Summer. I think I’ll let you run out in the yard a bit.”

She opened the back door, and Blackie, after sniffing a bit, to make sure there were no dogs about, went out on the back steps. The yard was not as large as the one where Mabel and Arthur lived, nor did it have in it a grape arbor.

“But it doesn’t matter,” thought Blackie. “I shall not stay here very long, especially if I go to the country with the lady. I will be glad to be on a farm once more. Wouldn’t it be queer if she took me to the same farm where I used to live? I would like to see my mother, and my brothers and sisters once more. That little Scratcho was a queer cat!” And Blackie thought of one brother who was named Scratcho because he used to scratch his ear in such a funny way.

Blackie sat on the back steps and looked around Mrs. Thompson’s yard. The cat saw no dogs, nor any other cats, and then, thinking there might, perhaps, be pussies in the yards on either side, Blackie went down the steps.

"Now don't you run away!" called the lady, playfully shaking her finger at Blackie.

"Pur-r-r-r!" said Blackie, which, I suppose, might be her way of saying that she would not run off.

Down the walk she went, and she looked up at the fences on either side.

"I wonder if there are other cats over there?" thought Blackie. "That fence doesn't look any higher than mine at home. Perhaps I can jump to the top. I'm going to try."

Blackie gave a little run, and then jumped for the top of the fence. To her delight she found that she could reach the top, where she clung with her sharp claws.

"Now that isn't so bad!" she told herself. "I am getting to be a better jumper. Running away did that, I think, just as Speckle said it might. I'm glad I left home, though I do miss those children. Never mind, I shall go back to them some day."

Perched on top of the fence, Blackie looked down in other yards. She hoped to see another cat with whom she might talk, but none was there. Blackie did see something which she did not like very well, and that was a big dog asleep in front of his kennel.

"Hum!" thought Blackie. "He seems to be a savage chap. I hope he doesn't get after me."

It's lucky he's chained. He doesn't look as though he liked cats."

Just then, from behind her, on the fence at the other side of the yard, Blackie heard a voice saying, in cat language:

"Hello, Blackie, where did you come from, and how did you get here, if I may ask?"

Blackie turned and saw a yellow cat sitting on the other fence.

"How do you do?" asked Blackie politely. "I just happened to come here, but how did you know my name, and what is yours?"

"I guessed your name was Blackie because you are so black," said the other cat. "My name is Topaz, for I am colored like a yellow topaz stone, you see. I live here. Do you live there?"

"Well, I am staying with Mrs. Thompson for a while," Blackie answered. "I ran away from my own home. Did you ever run away?"

"Never!" exclaimed Topaz. "I'd never *dream* of doing such a thing."

"Did you ever have any adventures?" asked Blackie.

"No, I never did—"

"Well, that's because you never ran away," went on Blackie. "You *have* to run away to get adventures. I've had two or three already,

and I'm expecting more. I'll come over and tell you about them."

But just then something happened. The big dog in the yard awakened, and seeing Blackie perched on the fence, up he jumped with a growl and a bark, and made a rush for the black cat.

"Oh, my goodness!" cried Blackie, jumping down quickly and fairly scooting into the house. "Oh, if that dog should get me!"

"Don't be afraid!" called Topaz. "That dog is a bad one, but he is chained."

Blackie had forgotten about the chain when she leaped off the fence so quickly.

"He might break his chain and then he'd get us," said the black cat, when she was safely on her own back stoop once more.

"He could not get over the fence," Topaz said. "Don't be afraid. He always barks at me, and tries to get me when I go on his fence."

"I don't like that kind of a dog," said Blackie, who was breathing fast. "I'll not go on his fence again."

"Come over and talk to me," invited Topaz. "There are no dogs here."

So Blackie went over and had a nice talk with the yellow cat. Blackie told about her adventures, and how she got on the roof and was taken in by Mrs. Thompson.

"Yes, she is a good lady, and kind to cats," said Topaz. "I go over to see her once in a while, and she gives me nice things to eat. She had a white cat once."

"What happened to her?" asked Blackie.

"Oh, while Mrs. Thompson was out one day a bad boy tied a tin can to the white cat's tail, and it frightened her so that she ran away, and never came back. We never saw her again."

"That was too bad," said Blackie. "It was an unpleasant adventure."

"It's best to stay home," spoke the yellow cat. "No adventures for me!"

"If you don't have adventures you will never be a good fence-jumper," Blackie said. "Speckle, the cat who lived next door to me in my other home, told me so."

"Well, jumping fences isn't all there is in life," spoke Topaz, as she washed her face with her paw.

"Here, Blackie! Blackie!" called Mrs. Thompson, from the back step. "It's time for your dinner. Come and get it!"

"Excuse me," said Blackie to the yellow cat. "I have to go now. I'll see you this afternoon."

That afternoon, and several other times later, on different days, Blackie and Topaz met on the back fence and talked. Blackie was getting to like it more and more in her new home. But



Whenever he saw her he barked and growled, and tried to break his chain to get loose.

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still she was thinking that she did not have adventures enough.

Every once in a while she would get up on the fence to look at the big dog, and whenever he saw her he barked and growled, and tried to break his chain to get loose. But he could not.

One day something new happened to Blackie. Mrs. Thompson had been very busy packing trunks and getting ready to go to the country. And this day she said:

"Come, Blackie. If you are going to travel with me I must put you in a traveling basket, so I can take you on the train."

She lifted Blackie up in her arms, and the next thing the black cat knew was that she found herself in a basket, with a cover shut tightly over the top.

"Well, this isn't so very nice," thought the black cat. "But still if we are going to the country it may be all right. It's part of the adventure, I suppose."

Then Blackie felt herself being lifted up and carried along.

"I wonder what is going to happen now?" thought the black cat.

CHAPTER VII

BLACKIE IN A TRAIN

SHUT up as she was in the basket, Blackie could see little of what was going on about her, or where she was being carried. There were little cracks in the basket, to be sure, but one can not see much through such cracks, especially when being carried along, and bobbing up and down.

"Oh, dear!" thought Blackie. "This isn't at all nice. It's like the time when Arthur and Mabel brought me away from the farm. They put me in a basket then, I remember that very well, though I was only a little kitten."

Blackie could tell that Mrs. Thompson was carrying the basket, for, every little while the lady would speak to the pet cat.

"Don't be afraid now, Blackie," the lady would say. "You'll be all right in a little while. Nothing shall hurt you."

And Mrs. Thompson spoke in such a gentle voice, just the kind that dogs and cats like to hear, that Blackie felt better.

"I guess it will be all right," thought the black

cat. "I'll try to go to sleep, and when I wake up I may be in the nice country."

Blackie curled up in a little ball in the basket, and tried to go to sleep. But it was hard work. The basket kept bobbing up and down, and then, after a while, Blackie felt herself being set down, basket and all. Then followed a strange rumbling sound, like distant thunder. Blackie remembered that, for she knew what thunder showers were, and she did not like them, nor rain.

"Oh, dear!" thought the black cat. "I hope it isn't going to lighten. I can't bear that. Still it can't hurt me in the basket."

But it did not seem to be a storm. The low, rumbling noise kept up, and Blackie felt herself, basket and all, being gently "jiggled," as she said afterward. Then Blackie began to feel sleepy.

"Oh, I know where I am now!" she suddenly thought. "I'm on a railroad train! Just as when Arthur and Mabel brought me from the country! Mrs. Thompson has brought me to the railroad car in the basket, and that's what makes the rumbling sound. It's the car wheels. Now I can go to sleep in peace, and when I awaken I'll be in the nice country."

How long she slept Blackie did not know, but when she did wake up she found herself being lifted up in the basket again.

"I guess we must be in the country," she

thought. "Now I shall have some nice milk, and perhaps I may see my brothers and sisters."

Blackie felt herself being carried out in the air, for she could feel the gentle Summer breeze blowing on her through the cracks in the basket. Then she heard a lot of strange noises which frightened her. There were shouts and yells, the puffing of engines, the ringing of bells and the blowing of whistles.

"Oh, dear! What can this be?" thought Blackie. "I guess it must be the railroad station where the 'choo-choo' cars stop, as Mabel used to call them when she was a little girl and I was a little kitten."

And that is where Blackie was. The train Mrs. Thompson had taken had reached the station, and she had gotten out with her cat in the basket.

"My, I did not know the country was as noisy as this," thought Blackie. But she was not quite in the country yet, you see. Mrs. Thompson had to take a wagon to get to her country place.

Blackie felt her basket being set down and she heard Mrs. Thompson talking to some man about trunks and boxes, and about bringing up a carriage, and things like that.

Then, all at once, Blackie noticed that the cover of her basket was loose. There was a hole out of which she could put her head.

"I guess I'll get a breath of fresh air and look around," said Blackie to herself. Out of the basket she popped her head, and she saw Mrs. Thompson standing a little way off, on the station platform, talking to the baggage-man. On the track, to one side, was the train which had brought Blackie and Mrs. Thompson to the country. The engine was puffing, and the bell was ringing, for the train was about to start off again.

All of a sudden there was a dreadfully loud noise, almost like a gun being fired, and then followed a loud whistle.

"Whoo-ee!"

"Oh, my! Oh, my!" cried poor frightened Blackie to herself. "This is dreadful! It must be a terribly big dog after me! I'm not going to stay in this basket and be bitten!"

With that Blackie gave a sudden jump, and out of the basket she went, knocking it over. The whistle of the steam engine, and the loud noise, which sounded like a gun (but which was only the locomotive giving a strong puff of steam to get started) all these noises kept getting louder and louder, and Blackie was so scared that she ran along the station platform until she found some boxes and barrels, and in among these she ran to hide.

"At least the dog can't get me in here," thought

the black cat. "I am safe for a time. Oh, what a lot of adventures I am having! I guess even Speckle would say these are enough to make one a good fence-jumper. I jumped out of the basket, anyhow."

Hidden as she was behind the boxes and barrels, Blackie could not see Mrs. Thompson now.

"I'll just stay here until everything gets quiet," thought Blackie, "then I'll come out and go to Mrs. Thompson's country house. For I like her and I'll stay with her a little longer before I go away again, and make a journey back to Arthur and Mabel."

Blackie did not stop to think that perhaps she might not be able to find her way to Mrs. Thompson's country house, which the black cat had never seen. All Blackie thought of then was hiding away from the noise.

The train puffed away, and it grew more quiet about the station, but still there were quite a number of sounds. Men and boys walked up and down the platform, whistling and calling one to another.

"I won't walk out yet," thought Blackie.

Meanwhile Mrs. Thompson, having finished telling the express-man all about bringing her trunks to the country house, looked around for the basket with Blackie in it. She saw the basket turned on its side, but no cat in it.

"Oh, dear!" cried Mrs. Thompson. "Where has Blackie gone? Blackie! Blackie! Where are you?"

But Blackie did not mew or purr in answer. She did not even hear Mrs. Thompson calling, for just then a baggage-man wheeled a rumbling truck along the platform, and it made a great noise.

"Oh, where can my nice cat have gone to?" asked Mrs. Thompson. "I must find her. Did any one see her?"

"I saw a black cat jump out of the basket just as the engine whistled," said a man.

"That was Blackie," said Mrs. Thompson. "Which way did she run? I'll give a dollar to get her back."

"She ran down the platform," spoke another man. "I'll see if I can find her for you."

"And so will we," said two or three boys. They would have been glad to find Blackie to get the dollar, I guess. Then began a search for the black cat. But no one found her, for Blackie well knew how to hide in among the boxes and barrels.

"Well, I guess she has run away," said Mrs. Thompson, at last. "I'll have to go on to my country house alone. If any of you men around the depot find her, please save her for me."

"We will," said the railroad men.

Mrs. Thompson drove away in a carriage, taking the empty basket with her.

"I'm sorry I had to run away from such a nice lady," thought Blackie, in her hiding place. "I'll go back to her after dark."

Blackie was not hungry, for she had been well fed before being shut up in the basket. She curled herself snugly up and waited. Pretty soon the men and boys stopped looking for her, and, after a while it grew more quiet about the railroad station.

"I guess I can come out now and look around," thought the black cat. "I'll start off in the country, and I ought to be able to find Mrs. Thompson's house. I think she must live in a quiet place, for she was so quiet in her city house, living all alone except for me."

Blackie stuck her nose out a little way from in between two barrels. She sniffed the air, and she smelled no danger. Then she looked around and came out. She ran down the platform a little way. There were no trains at the depot now, for which Blackie was glad.

"Now for a nice trip to the country," thought Blackie. She looked across the road and saw that the station was near a little country town. There were wagons going up and down the street, but not as many as in the city where Blackie had come from.

"I wonder if I can get a drink anywhere around here?" thought Blackie. So she sniffed the air hard, and she smelled water. She went toward it and saw, not far away, a drinking-fountain for horses. Some of the water dripped down and had made a little puddle on the ground.

"I'll get a drink there," thought Blackie, and while she was drinking something else happened to her.

CHAPTER VIII

BLACKIE IS CHASED

BLACKIE was lapping up the water from the little puddle, when all at once, from behind her, she heard a boy's voice shouting in eager tones:

"There she is! There's that lady's black cat! She said she'd give a dollar to whoever found her! I'm going to get that dollar! Whoop!"

Blackie gave one quick glance behind her. She saw a red-haired boy running toward her with hands held out ready to grab her.

"My! What's going to happen now?" thought Blackie. "Another adventure, I'm sure. Going to get a dollar to catch me, is he? Well, we'll see about that!"

Blackie gave such a sudden spring to get away that her red ribbon, with the tinkling bell, caught on a piece of the fountain and was pulled off.

"Oh, dear!" thought Blackie. "There goes my nice ribbon! Mabel will be sorry when she sees that it is lost. And I'm sorry too. But I can't stop to get it now. No indeed! I must get away from that boy!"

Blackie thought all this in a flash, as she sprang away from the fountain, leaving the red ribbon and bell behind her. She had not had half enough water to drink, but going thirsty was better than being caught by a boy.

Blackie had not heard all the boy said, nor did the black cat stop to think that perhaps the boy was only going to catch her so he could take her back to Mrs. Thompson. That was really what the boy was going to do. He did not mean to hurt Blackie.

But all the cat thought of was that a boy was chasing her and wanted to catch her, and Blackie did not want to be caught. So she ran as fast as she could.

Across the street, under a wagon, between the legs of a horse, and under an automobile, sprang the black cat. After her ran the red-haired boy. He stopped to pick up the red ribbon and bell.

"Maybe if I can't catch the cat the lady will give me ten cents for the ribbon and bell," said the boy to himself. "Ten cents is better than nothing, and maybe I won't get the cat. She runs very fast."

The boy was one who had been around the railroad station when Mrs. Thompson missed Blackie, and when she had offered a dollar reward to get back her pet.

On and on ran the black cat through the

streets of the country town. In and out she dodged among the men and women who were hurrying along the street.

A woman saw the running cat, and she saw the boy chasing after her.

"Here, little boy, why are you chasing that poor cat?" asked the woman. "Don't you know it isn't right to chase cats?"

"Yes'm—I—I know," said the red-haired boy, who was breathing quite fast. "But I'm not chasing this cat to do her any harm. I want to catch her for a lady who'll give me a dollar for her. The cat got out of her basket."

"Humph!" said the woman, looking over the tops of her glasses at the red-haired boy. "I've heard of folks letting the cat out of the bag, but I never heard of anybody letting one out of a basket."

"This lady was at the railroad station," said the boy, as she ran on after Blackie. "She is Mrs. Thompson."

"Oh, I know her," said the woman who had spoken about letting cats out of bags. "She lives out near me. So she has come to the country for her summer vacation again, has she? And brought a cat with her. She always did like cats."

The boy did not stay to hear all this. He was again running on after Blackie, for he

wanted to earn that dollar. And Blackie, not knowing anything about the boy, nor that he would be kind to her, ran on as fast as she could.

Pretty soon some other boys saw the red-haired lad running after the black cat, and they shouted to him.

"Hi, there, Carrots!" they called, naming him Carrots in fun because his hair was the color of carrots. "Hi, there, Carrots! What you chasin' that cat for?"

"For a dollar," answered the red-haired boy, with a grin.

"We'll help you!" said the other boys, quickly.

"All right," invited the red-haired boy. "Come along!"

There were three boys now chasing after poor Blackie, and the cat was getting tired.

"I must get away from them, somehow," she thought. "I wonder what Speckle did when he was chased like this? I ought to have asked him before I came away. Next time I run off I'll know more about it. And maybe I won't run off again."

Blackie turned around the corner so quickly that she ran right between the legs of an old gentleman who was walking along.

"Oh, my! Scat! What's this? A black cat!" cried the old gentleman, and he stumbled so, try-

ing not to step on Blackie, that his tall silk hat fell off and rolled into the gutter.

Then around the corner came the three boys after the cat. The old gentleman saw them and cried:

"Boys! Boys! You mustn't chase cats that way. Look what she did to me—knocked off my hat!"

"We're chasing the cat to get a dollar," said the red-haired boy, and then he and his friends ran on.

Blackie was getting very tired now. She looked back and saw the old gentleman picking up his silk hat, from which he brushed the dust.

"I'm sorry about his hat," thought Blackie. "But it was not my fault. I did not mean to run between his legs."

"Come on, fellows! We'll get her now!" cried the red-haired boy, as he ran on faster than before.

Blackie looked ahead of her. She saw near the sidewalk an open cellar door of a store.

"That will be a good place to hide," thought Blackie. "The boys can't find me down there in the dark," and down the outside cellar stairs she ran.

"Now we've got her!" said another boy. "She can't get out of the cellar."

There were many boxes and barrels in the

store cellar. Blackie crept away back in a far corner, crouched down, and kept as still as a mouse. She heard the boys coming down, and she heard them talking and moving about among the boxes and barrels. But the cellar was dark, and Blackie had a good hiding place. Not even when the boys borrowed a lantern from the store-keeper and searched in the cellar with that, could they find the cat.

"We'll come to-morrow and get her," said the red-haired boy. "I want that dollar."

Pretty soon the boys went away, leaving Blackie down in the cellar. She did not come out for a long time, and when she did it was getting dark. Blackie had found a little piece of meat in the cellar, and she ate that. She was very thirsty but she thought she would wait until it was a little darker before she went out to look for some water, as there was none in the store cellar.

A little later it grew very dark, and Blackie crept out into the street again through a hole under the cellar door, for it had been shut when the store was closed. Blackie found a little brook near the edge of the country town, and there she had a good drink.

"Well, at last I can have some peace and quietness," thought Blackie. "But what am I going to do to-night? Where shall I stay? I can't

find Mrs. Thompson's house at night. I shall have to wait until morning. Oh, dear! This is the bad part of having adventures."

Blackie did not know what to do. Never before had she been without a good place in which to sleep at night.

She looked about her. She could see lights in houses here and there along the country road, but she did not know whether or not it was best to go prying around the back door of any of them.

"They might take me in and feed me and keep me," thought Blackie, "but I could not tell which house has a dog living in it too, and dogs do not like cats. At least very few dogs do. And in those houses there may be bad boys, like those who chased me to-day. I guess I had better look for some other place to stay."

Blackie wandered on until she found a barn with some hay in it. This made a warm place for her to sleep, since it was Summer.

"I'll stay here to-night," thought Blackie, and she did.

In the morning she got a drink at the place where the farm horses were watered and then, without any one seeing her, Blackie went on again, down the country road. For she was in the country now, though just where she did not know.

"I must look for Mrs. Thompson," thought the black cat. "I like her."

All that day Blackie wandered around the country. She went to house after house, but when she saw no one who looked like the kind lady she ran away again. Sometimes people would call to her, and offer her things to eat, but Blackie was afraid. She managed to find a little to eat and water to drink. She wanted milk, but did not know where to get it.

The next night Blackie slept in another barn, and she asked the cows and horses if they knew where Mrs. Thompson lived. But none of them did.

"The farmer's name here is Jones," said a cow, as she chewed her cud.

"And he doesn't like cats; I heard him say so," spoke a brown horse as he munched his oats. "Besides, he has two dogs."

"Then this is no place for me," Blackie replied.

In the morning she hurried off again, and that day she had a strange adventure. She had come to another country town, and in a big green field she saw what she thought was a big white house. Flags were fluttering on top of it, and Blackie could hear music playing. Going into the white house were many persons, boys and girls among them.

All at once a boy saw Blackie and he called to some other boys:

"Oh, look at the black cat! Let's catch her and tie a tin can to her tail!"

"Come on!" cried another boy.

They ran toward Blackie, but the black cat ran away from them, and under the edge of the white house, which Blackie found was made of cloth. Inside it were many strange animals, some in cages, and in one cage Blackie saw some straw.

"I'll jump in there and hide," she said, and down in the straw nestled the cat. And then, from the other end of the cage, there rose up a big black bear.

"Who are you, and what are you doing in my cage?" the bear asked.

"Oh, please excuse me!" cried Blackie. "I ran in here to get away from some bad boys who were going to tie a tin can to my tail. I want to hide here."

"Oh, that's all right," said the bear kindly. "Hide as much as you like. What is your name, and where do you live?"

"My name is Blackie," was the answer, "and I guess I don't live anywhere now. I am a lost cat."

"That's too bad," said the big shaggy animal.

"My name is Dido, and I am a dancing bear. I dance in this circus."

"Is this a circus?" asked Blackie.

"That's what it is," answered Dido. "Don't you see Tum Tum, the jolly elephant over there?" and Dido pointed his paw at the big creature. "Whenever you see an elephant that is a circus or a menagerie."

"Is he an elephant?" Blackie asked, looking at the big animal.

"Yes, and his name is Tum Tum. He is the most jolly elephant you ever knew, always laughing and eating peanuts. He's in a book, too."

"What do you mean—in a book?"

"I mean somebody wrote a story-book about Tum Tum, who had many adventures. I think I'm going to be in a book some day."

"That will be nice," said Blackie, who was not quite so frightened now. "Did you ever hear of a cat being in a book? I have had some adventures that might do for a book," and she told Dido, the dancing bear, about them.

"I don't know," answered Dido. "I once knew a dog, named Don, who was in a story book. He was a runaway dog, too, he told me. So he must be something like you. If somebody wrote a book about a runaway dog I don't see why he couldn't write one about a lost cat."

"I don't either," said Blackie, looking at Tum



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"Oh, that's all right," said the bear kindly. "Hide as much as you like."

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Tum, who was eating a bag of peanuts given him by a little girl.

Then Dido told about some of his adventures, which I have already set down in a book with his name on it, just as those about Don, the runaway dog, are in *his* book. Dido told Blackie many things about the circus, too. And finally the black cat said:

“Well, Dido, I am very glad to have met you, and I thank you for letting me hide in the straw of your cage. But now I think I will go on, if those bad boys are not around. I’ll look out and see.”

CHAPTER IX

BLACKIE MEETS DON

BLACKIE scrambled down out of the cage of Dido, the dancing bear, ran between the legs of Tum Tum, the jolly elephant, who called to her in his big, kind, trumpety voice, and then stuck her head out under the circus tent.

"Is everything all right?" asked Dido, who soon was to go in the ring and perform his tricks with his master.

"Yes, I don't see anything of those bad boys," answered Blackie and then she quickly ran off the circus grounds, after one look back at the crowds of people, the gay, fluttering flags, and the men selling pink lemonade, peanuts and toy balloons.

"Another adventure!" exclaimed Blackie, as she went to a little brook in a field to get a drink. "Whoever would think that I should run into a circus," thought Blackie, as she washed her face with her paws. "I don't believe even Speckle, as many times as he has run away, ever met Dido, the dancing bear, or Tum Tum, the jolly elephant.

"I wonder who that dog Don can be that Dido spoke of? I wonder if he would be kind to me if he met me? I could tell him I knew Dido and Tum Tum, and that might make a difference. Of course I don't know the bear and elephant very well," thought Blackie. "But I had no time to stay to get better acquainted. A circus must be a queer place."

Blackie did not quite know what to do next. She looked over the fields, and, far away, she could see the white circus tent. Then she looked down in the water and she could see herself, as in a looking-glass.

"My! How rough my fur is!" said Blackie. "I'm all ruffled up, and I'm beginning to get thin, I do believe! That comes of not having enough to eat. I'm half starved. I think I'll go back home. I have had enough of running away.

"It's all very well to talk about having adventures, and getting yourself in a book, and all that. But Muffins was right. It is nicer to stay home. I don't wonder Speckle would not run away with me, nor Muffins either.

"Yes, that's what I'll do," went on Blackie, as she took another look at herself in the water looking-glass. I'll go back home. There's no use trying to find Mrs. Thompson, though she was very good and kind to me. I can't tell

which is her house. I'll go back to the city, to Arthur and Mabel. They must be as lonesome for me as I am for them."

The two children were. They had looked all over for Blackie, and even put an advertisement in the newspapers, asking any one who saw their pet to bring her back.

But Blackie was far away, for Mrs. Thompson had taken her on a long railroad journey.

"Sleeping in barns, and running down in store cellars isn't good for a cat's fur," thought Blackie, as she saw how ruffled hers was. "I must give myself a good cleaning before I go back home, or the children will not know me."

So Blackie stayed in the field and washed herself with her red tongue. Then she crept up behind a house and found a piece of fish the farmer's wife had thrown out. It was not as nice fish as Blackie used to get in her own home, but she could find no better.

"Never mind," said the black cat to herself, "I'll soon be where I belong, and I'll never run away again. I'm going home."

So Blackie started to go to her home. But she found the same trouble she had found in trying to get back to Mrs. Thompson. Blackie was so far away from her home with the good children that she could not find it. Up and

down, here and there, she wandered for several days, but she could not find her home.

"Oh, dear!" Blackie exclaimed one day, when, all tired out, and hungry and thirsty she lay down in the grass to rest. "Oh, dear! I'm lost! That's all there is about it! I don't know where my home is, and I'm lost! I wonder what I had better do?"

Blackie was all alone. There was no one to tell her what to do, so she had to think it out for herself.

"Let me see now," she said. "Even though I am lost I must have something to eat and drink, and a place to sleep. I think I had better go to some house and see if they will take me in.

"If they will, perhaps they will keep me for a while, until I get fat again, and feel better, and then I can find my own home. Yes, that is what I'll do. I've wandered around enough. I'll go to some house, and mew. They'll know that I'm hungry and feed me."

Blackie walked out of the field to the road, and down that toward a big, white farmhouse. It looked so nice and clean that Blackie thought surely it would be a good home for her.

"I'll go around to the kitchen door," thought Blackie. "That is where there will be something to eat."

She went around the gravel walk of the house,

and toward the back door. But, just as she was going up the back steps, down them rushed a big dog, barking loudly and calling out, in animal talk:

"Hi, there! No cats allowed around here! Be off! Bow wow!"

Blackie did not stop to talk. Away she ran as fast as she could go, and as she saw, over her shoulder, the dog coming after her, up a tree she ran. The dog came to a stop at the bottom of the tree, and barking up at Blackie said:

"What do you mean by coming here, anyhow? Who are you, and what do you want?"

Before she had run away, and while she was living with Arthur and Mabel, Blackie would not have paid much attention to any dog. She knew very few dogs, not even the one next door, and most dogs were cross and ugly, she thought. She did not think it safe to talk to them.

But now she was up a tree, and she knew it would be safe to speak to this dog from up there. Also Blackie was so tired and hungry that she felt she must do something to get help. And perhaps this dog was not as cross as some, even if he did chase her. He might tell her where to get something to eat.

So, sitting on the limb of the tree, and looking down at the dog, Blackie said:

"Please be nice to me, Mr. Dog. I am so

tired and hungry, and I'm lost. I ran away, Mr. Dog."

"Hum, ran away did you?" and the dog's voice was softer now. "I once ran away myself. But my name is not Mr. Dog. It is Don."

"What! Is your name Don?" cried Blackie, and she was so surprised that she nearly fell off the limb of the tree. "Why, I've heard about you, Don?"

"You have? From whom?" Don wanted to know.

"From your friends in the circus; Dido, the dancing bear, and Tum Tum, the jolly elephant."

"Well, I never!" barked Don. "So you know them, do you?"

"Yes, I have met them, though I can't say I know them very well. They told me about you."

"They did, eh? Well, well! Fancy now, you meeting Dido, the dancing bear. He's a great chap, isn't he? and such a fine dancer!"

"Oh, I didn't see him dance," answered Blackie. "I only ran in his cage to get away from some bad boys. Dido was very kind to me."

"Humph! I suppose you mean I wasn't kind," said Don.

"Oh, I didn't say *that*," went on Blackie quickly.

"Well, I guess I was a bit cross and quick," admitted Don. "But I didn't mean anything. Every one says my bark is worse than my bite. I didn't intend to bite you anyhow. I was just going to chase you away. They don't like cats at our house."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" said Blackie sadly. "I hoped I might get something to eat and drink here."

"Oh, I guess I can fix *that* all right for you," said Don, in a more kindly voice. "But you surprise me when you tell me you met my friends Dido and Tum Tum. Take that elephant chap now. Didn't you find Tum Tum a fine, jolly fellow?"

"Why, he *looked* so," said Blackie, "and Dido *said* he was, so I guess he must be."

"Oh, he *is*," barked Don. "I know him well. He's the jolliest elephant you'd want to meet. Had a book written about him, too."

"So Dido was saying. I just spoke to Tum Tum, or, rather, he spoke to me as I was running out of the circus tent."

"Say, look here now," said Don, a bit sharply. "I hope *you* didn't run away from the circus. That wouldn't be right, and if Dido hid you in his cage it might get him in trouble."

"Oh, no, I don't belong to the circus," said Blackie. "I just happened to go in the tent. I

belong at home. But I'm lost. I'll tell you all about it."

"Do," said Don. "I should like to hear about your adventures, and I'll tell you some of mine. I'm in a book too."

"So I heard."

"But first," said Don, "I must see about getting you something to eat. Come down out of the tree."

"And you won't chase me or bite me?"

"No. Honest I won't. See, I'll cross my tail," and Don waved his tail up and down and sideways, like a cross, to show he meant what he said.

So Blackie came down out of the tree.

CHAPTER X

BLACKIE SCARES A DOG

“**N**OW we can talk nicely,” said Don, as he walked along beside Blackie, when she had jumped from the tree. “Come over here in the shade and I’ll tell you of my adventures.”

“I’ve had some adventures, too,” spoke the cat. “Not as wonderful as yours, perhaps, but still they were quite some for me. I never thought, when I started out, that I would meet a dancing bear and Tum Tum, the jolly elephant. And I’m very glad I met you too, Don, especially since you are so good to me.”

“Oh, don’t mention it,” went on Don. “I’m sorry for what I did first. Now I’ll begin.”

So Don told Blackie of his many adventures. But as I have written a book especially about them, where you may read them for yourself, I won’t put any of them down here.

“My! You had a perfectly wonderful time!” exclaimed Blackie, when Don had finished.

“Tell me about yourself now,” invited the big dog. And Blackie did. She told how she had

gone wandering off, so that she might learn to become a fine fence-jumper, how she had gotten on the roof of the house, how good Mrs. Thompson had taken care of her and brought her to the country, and how, finally, she had gotten lost.

"And I'm lost yet," went on the black cat. "I don't know where to go or what to do, Don. I thought I would find a place in this house to stay, but you tell me they don't like cats."

"They don't," Don said. "At least they never keep a cat where I live now, and I am sure that shows they do not like them. For if they kept one I would be friendly with her and not chase her as I did you. But from now on I'm not going to chase cats. I never knew before how nice they could be. I thought they always scratched and bit. And many a time I've had cats crook up their backs at me, make their tails big, and hiss like a snake."

"That is our way of scaring dogs," said Blackie. "You see most dogs are bigger and stronger than we, and the only way we can scare them is to fluff out our fur, and make believe we are twice as big as we are. Then we hiss like a snake, or like a steam pipe, and that scares the dog more. But I was so tired and frightened that I didn't try to scare you, Don."

"I'm glad you didn't. Now we'll be friends.

But of course if you see some other dog running at you, why you'll scare him, I suppose, Blackie."

"Yes, I guess I will," answered the black cat, sort of smiling.

The two new friends talked for some time longer and then, all at once, Don said:

"Oh, Blackie! I forgot! You said you were hungry, didn't you?"

"Yes, Don, I am hungry. But you say they don't like cats in your house, so I don't see how I am going to get anything to eat there."

"Oh, don't you worry about that," said Don with a laugh. "I'll fix *that* all right. Just you leave it to me. Now I'll tell you what we'll do. They feed me pretty well at this house, for they like me. They bring out nice bones and bits of meat, bread with gravy on and—"

"Oh, don't talk about it!" spoke Blackie quickly. "It makes me hungry to hear about all those good things!"

"Well, you'll be having some soon," said the dog, "for they'll be bringing out my dinner directly. I think it will be chicken to-day."

"Oh, my! Chicken!" mewed Blackie, putting out her red tongue. "How good that sounds!"

"It will *taste* good, too," said Don.

"How do you know you will have chicken?" asked the black cat.

"Well, I always have the same thing the

family has for dinner," Don said, "and I know they are going to have chicken to-day for I saw the butcher bringing some. The butcher's boy always sets his basket down on the back stoop when he rings the bell, and I can look in it."

"Do you ever take anything out?" asked Blackie, sort of smiling.

"I did once, when I was a little puppy," Don said, "but I knew no better. I was whipped for it, so I never did it again. But now I'll tell you what to do, so you will have a good dinner."

"And will you have one too?" asked Blackie.

"Oh, yes indeed. Don't you worry about me, Now you go hide in my house—a kennel they call it. And when they bring me out my dinner I'll give you all you want."

"Will there be enough for both of us?" asked Blackie.

"Oh, yes. They bring me plenty of dinner. Look out, here they come with it now. Into the kennel with you!"

Blackie looked and saw, coming down the back stoop, a fat colored cook. In her hand she carried a dish, and even as she ran into the dog's house Blackie could smell that it held something good.

"I believe it *is* chicken," thought the black cat. "Oh, how nice!"

Don stood in front of the kennel, as Blackie

ran inside. Along came the fat cook, who was a nice, black shiny color, almost like the cat herself, only, of course the cook did not have fur on.

"Heah's yo' dinnah, Don," said the cook. "I done brought yo' good an' plenty this time, 'cause I thought you'd be hungry. An' I thought I done see a cat 'round yeah a while ago, but I guess maybe I must be mistook, 'cause you wouldn't let no cats stay in dish yeah yard; would you, Don?"

Don barked and wagged his tail. Just what he said to the cook, she, of course, did not know, for she could not understand dog language. But Don was sort of laughing to himself. There a cat was in his kennel all the while and the fat, black cook did not know it!

"Heah's yo' dinnah, now, Don. Eat it," she continued. "I'll get you some fresh watah, too."

And when she had set down the dish of chicken, which was left over from the family dinner, and had given Don some fresh water, the cook went back in the house.

"Are you there, Blackie?" asked Don, in a dog whisper.

"Yes, I'm here," answered the cat from inside the kennel.

"Then come on out and have some dinner."

I think you can guess how good the chicken dinner tasted to poor, hungry Blackie. She ate

so much that she was afraid she would take more than her share, and not leave enough for Don.

"But don't you worry about that," said the dog kindly, when Blackie spoke about it. "You eat all you want. I'll have plenty, and anyhow I can get more later."

So Blackie had the first really good meal she had eaten since she had left Mrs. Thompson. And when she had taken a good drink of water she felt much better.

"Now you can go to sleep in my kennel," said Don, "and no one will disturb you. I always like to sleep after a good meal."

"So do I," said Blackie.

For several days Blackie lived with Don in his kennel, keeping out of sight of the people in the house. I don't really suppose they would have minded Blackie, only they had gotten out of the habit of keeping a cat, so Don imagined they did not like such animals. Anyhow, he and Blackie thought it would be best for the black cat to remain quietly in the kennel, and she did.

"Well, I think I'll be traveling on," said Blackie one day.

"Traveling on?" asked Don. "Where are you going, back to the circus?"

"Oh, no," answered Blackie. "I don't belong there. I am going back to the home where I lived with the little boy and girl, Arthur and



For several days Blackie lived with Don in his kennel.

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Mabel. I am lonesome for them, and I am sure they miss me."

"Do you know how to find your way back to them?" asked Don.

"Well, no, not exactly," replied Blackie. "But I am lost anyhow, and I can't be any more lost than I am now, no matter what I do."

"No, I suppose not," Don said.

"So I am going to wander on, over the fields and through the woods, until I get back to the city where Arthur and Mabel live. Then perhaps I can find their house."

"All right. I am sorry to have you go," Don said, "for I have come to like you very much."

"And I like you," Blackie spoke politely.

"I never knew how nice cats were before," went on the dog. "And if you meet Tum Tum, the elephant, or Dido, the dancing bear, on your journey give them my love."

"I shall," said the cat.

Then she told Don good-by, and the two rubbed noses together, and Blackie started over the fields and through the woods.

She had so many adventures that I can not get them all in this book, but I will mention a few before I come to the big adventure by which Blackie finally found her home again.

Once as she was sleeping in the woods she heard a hissing noise like a steam radiator, and

she jumped up in time to see a big snake crawling along, his tongue going in and out as fast as anything.

"Oh!" exclaimed Blackie. "Are you going to bite me?"

"No, indeed!" answered the snake. "I don't bite cats unless they scratch me, and you haven't done that. I am on my way to find a hen's nest."

"Are you going to bite a chicken?" asked Blackie.

"No, but I am going to eat some of her eggs," and away crawled the snake.

"I'm glad I am not an egg," thought Blackie.

Another time Blackie had a nice adventure. She was walking along a country road, and she was quite tired and warm, for the sun was shining brightly. Blackie was hungry too.

All at once she heard a horn blown:

"Toot! Toot! Toot!"

"Ha! I wonder if that can be Dido, the dancing bear?" thought Blackie. "He told me when he went around doing his tricks his master blew on a horn. Perhaps Dido has come out of the circus and is going around dancing as he did at first."

But Blackie soon saw that it was not Dido's horn that was being blown. The sound came from a man who was riding on a wagon, and

from the wagon came a nice smell of fresh fish.

"Oh, how hungry I am!" thought Blackie.
"How I wish I had a piece of fish."

And what do you think happened? Why, when the wagon came up to Blackie, the man on it stopped tooting his horn and said:

"Hello, pussie! Would you like a nice fish head?"

"Meow!" answered Blackie, which was as near as she could say "yes" in our language.

"Here you are," the man said, and he tossed out on the grass a nice fish head, which cats like almost better than anything else.

"Mew-mew," said Blackie, which was her way of saying "Thank you!"

Then she ate the fish head, while the kind man drove on, blowing his horn:

"Toot! Toot! Tooti-ty-toot!" That meant he had fish to sell.

For several days Blackie traveled on, eating as best she could, and getting water to drink at way-side brooks. But she could not seem to find her home, where Arthur and Mabel lived.

One day Blackie was going along a street where it was nice and quiet. She looked up at the houses, wondering if she could go up to one of them and beg for something to eat, or some milk to drink.

All at once Blackie heard a dog barking, and

she saw one run down off the stoop at her. He was only a small dog, and instead of running away, as she might have done, Blackie thought to herself:

"Here is where I scare that dog. I'm going to crook up my back, puff out my tail and hiss like a snake. I'll see what he does then."

As soon as the dog got close to her, up went Blackie's back, until it looked like a hill of black fur. Her tail grew twice as large as it usually was, for she made the fur stick out straight, and oh! how she hissed!

"Wow! Yow! Yip! Yee!" howled the dog, and he stood still and barked hard at Blackie, but did not come near enough to bite her.

"Hiss! Hiss!" went the black cat.

"Wow! Yip!" howled the dog, and then he was so frightened that he turned around and ran up the stoop.

CHAPTER XI

BLACKIE IS SAD

“**T**HAT’S the time I scared a dog!” said Blackie to herself, laughing. For she had not hurt him, and she had stopped him from biting her, which was a good thing. I suppose it would be nicer if dogs and cats were more friendly, but they never seem to be that way—at least not very often.

Then Blackie saw something strange. Up on the stoop was what seemed to be a little baby girl, lying down. The dog ran up to the baby and began barking at her.

“My goodness!” said Blackie. “He’ll bite the child, that dog will. That must not be! I’ll stop him. I’m not afraid of him.”

Up the stoop ran Blackie. The dog was barking so hard at the baby that he did not see nor hear Blackie. She went close up behind him, and cried, in cat and dog language:

“Here, you let that little baby alone, if you please!”

“What’s that? Are you talking to me?” asked

the dog, as he began to turn around, not knowing who was speaking to him.

"Yes, I am," answered Blackie. "Go on, now! Run away, and let the child alone!"

"I will not!" said the dog, and then he turned all the way around and saw the big black cat. Up went Blackie's back again, her tail grew as large around as a big brush, and how she hissed! "*Zizz!*"

"Oh, yow! Oh, wow!" howled the dog. "It's that cat again! She's after me!"

Away he ran, down off the stoop, and Blackie could not help laughing at him, for she had not hurt him at all.

"I guess I made him let that baby alone," thought Blackie. "Don't be afraid, little one," said Blackie, though she knew, of course, that no child could understand cat-talk.

And then, to her surprise, Blackie saw that it was not a live baby at all, but a large doll, such as Mabel used to play with.

"Well did you ever!" exclaimed Blackie. "I thought it was a real child! It looks so natural. What will that dog think of me, taking a doll for a baby? He must be laughing at me."

But the dog was too frightened then to laugh, though later on, when Blackie had gone, the dog came out from under the stoop where he had gone to hide and as he looked at the doll, which

lay where the little girl-mother had dropped it, that dog said:

"Huh! That cat thought she was smart, driving me away because I was barking at a doll! I wouldn't hurt it!"

As Blackie stood on the stoop, looking at the doll, the door opened and a little girl came out.

"Oh, you nice, big, black cat!" exclaimed the little girl. "Did you come up on the stoop to look at my dollie?"

Of course Blackie could not tell *why* she had come up on the stoop, for the cat could not speak girl-language. But Blackie mewed, and rubbed up against the little girl's legs, purring, for the little girl was almost like Mabel, and quite as nice.

"Oh, I just love you, Pussy," said the little girl. "I'm going to get you a saucer of milk." And she did, still leaving her doll on the stoop. But the doll did not seem to mind.

"There you are, nice, black cat," the little girl said, as she came out with the milk. "I guess you are thirsty."

And Blackie was. She drank up all the milk, and wished there was more. She felt much better after that. The little girl watched the cat drinking the milk and said:

"I'm going in and ask my mother if I can keep you for my own, black pussy. You're

alive, and I like you better than my doll, though she is nice too."

Into the house hurried the little girl, leaving her doll on the stoop with Blackie. But the black cat, though she liked the little girl, did not want to stay and live in that house.

"I want to go on to my *own* home," thought Blackie. "I want Mabel and Arthur. Besides, if I lived here that dog and I would be always having trouble, I'm afraid. He is not like Don. I'm going to travel on."

And while the little girl was in the house, asking her mother if she could keep the cat, Blackie ran down the stoop, laughing in her own way, as she looked at the doll, and thought how she had mistaken it for a baby.

The dog came out from under the stoop where he had run to get away from Blackie and he was up beside the doll again when the little girl came out once more.

"Oh, where is that nice black cat?" asked the little girl, looking all around. "Where is he, Fido? Mother said I might keep her, but she is gone. Do you know where she is?"

"Bow wow!" barked Fido. "I'm glad she is gone. I don't like her, for she scared me. I'm glad she isn't going to live here."

Of course the little girl did not know that her dog Fido said that, but he really did. She was

sorry, the little girl was, that the cat had gone away. But it was best in the end, for I suppose Blackie and the dog would not have gotten along well together.

Down the street trotted the black cat, feeling not so hungry now. But she was still far from home, and she did not know when she would find the place where she used to live so very happily.

"I'll never run away again," Blackie said. "I've had enough of it. I have had adventures, it is true, and I am a good deal better fence-jumper than I used to be, but I have had a hard time of it. I will have many things to tell Speckle when I see him. And I wish I could see him right now, for then I would be home."

The next day when Blackie was traveling through a woods, and hoping that on the other side of it she might find the city where her house was, she saw a funny animal hopping along over the dried leaves. The animal looked like a cat, for it had fur, only it was white instead of black. And the animal had pink eyes and a pink nose.

"How do you do?" asked Blackie politely, for she saw that the animal was not going to hurt her.

"I am pretty well," answered the white animal. "How are you and what is your name?"

"Well, I've seen the time I felt better,"

answered Blackie, and she told her name, and mentioned that she was a cat.

"Oh, a cat; eh?" exclaimed the white animal. "Well, I'm a rabbit, and my name is Flop Ear. They call me that because one ear flops or falls over, see."

Flop Ear stood up on his hind legs, as easily as Dido, the dancing bear, could have done, and while one of his ears stood up straight the other one sort of leaned over, or flopped.

"Oh, I see how it is," spoke Blackie, laughing, for Flop Ear was a funny little rabbit. "Do you live here in these woods?"

"Yes, with my father and mother, and some brothers and sisters and also Lady Munch."

"Lady Munch?" exclaimed Blackie. "Who is she?"

"She is my grandmother," answered Flop Ear. "And we all like her very much. But excuse me, I must hurry on."

"Where are you going?" asked Blackie.

"Over in the field to get some carrots for dinner. Do you like carrots?"

"I never ate any," Blackie answered. "I'm a cat, you know."

"That's so, I forgot about that," spoke Flop Ear. "I was told never to play with cats or dogs, as they might bite me."

"I'd never bite you," said Blackie. "I think

you are very nice, and your fur is like mine. I'll go along with you and help you get the carrots, if you want me to, though I don't eat them."

"What do you eat?" asked Flop Ear, as he hopped along beside Blackie.

"Oh, meat and milk, and fish, when I can get them."

"Why can't you get them now?" the white rabbit wanted to know.

"Because I am a lost cat," answered Blackie. "I ran away from home, you see, to have adventures, and to learn to become a good fence-jumper, but it is not so easy to get things to eat when you are lost."

"I am sorry for you," said the white rabbit. "I never was lost and I am never going to run away from home."

"You do not need to learn to jump," Blackie told Flop Ear, "for you are a good jumper now."

"Yes, all rabbits are good jumpers," spoke Flop Ear, "but I never tried to jump over a fence. And I am never, never going to leave my home."

"No, don't," advised Blackie.

But you just wait and read, in the next book after this, what happened to Flop Ear.

Soon Blackie and Flop Ear came to the field where the carrots grew. The white rabbit nib-

bled one, and told the cat to taste. Blackie did, but said:

"Oh, I don't like carrots. They might be good if cooked in milk, but I do not like them raw."

"That's queer," replied Flop Ear. "They are best raw, *I* think."

The rabbit and the cat talked together a little longer, and then Blackie said she thought she had better travel on, and try to find her home.

"For I am tired of being a lost cat," sighed Blackie.

That night Blackie slept in a field under a pile of hay. There were some little mice who had made a nest there too, but Blackie did not touch them, though she liked to eat mice.

But for her supper that night Blackie had found a piece of meat in front of a butcher shop, and as she had eaten that she was not hungry. So she let the little mice alone, and I guess they were happy about that.

But oh! how lonesome Blackie was for her own home! She thought about it very often that night as she cuddled down in the hay.

"If I don't find my home before Winter I don't know what I shall do," thought Blackie. "It isn't so bad sleeping out in Summer, but in the Winter it is going to be dreadful! I simply must find my home."

For two days more Blackie traveled on. She came out of the woods, she left the fields, and then she found herself in a city. She walked through the streets. Sometimes boys would chase her, or throw stones at her, and sometimes dogs would run after her. Once or twice Blackie had to go up a tree to get away.

And then, one day, Blackie found herself on a street that she seemed to know. She looked up at the houses, hardly believing it at first, and then she saw that she was really right on the street where she had lived.

"Oh, why! I do believe I'm back in my own city again!" said the delighted Blackie to herself. "Yes, I know these houses, and there is the one I live in! Oh, how glad I am!"

Blackie ran up the front steps. But, somehow or other the house did not seem to be the same as when Blackie had lived there. The stoop was covered with dust, and it was never that way as long as Blackie could remember, for Mabel used to sweep it off every morning.

"This is queer," said Blackie. "I'll go around to the back."

The back door was closed, and so were the windows. Blackie ran all the way around the house, mewing. No one came out to let her in.

Blackie looked up at all the windows. They were closed down, and the shades were drawn.

“Why—why the family must have moved away!” thought Blackie, and she was very sad. “Oh, dear! After my long journey, and my many adventures, to get home and find the house locked up and the family gone! Oh, isn’t it too bad! What shall I do?”

Blackie was very sad. She felt all tired out and lonesome. She would have cried real tears had she been a little girl or boy, I guess. But, being only a cat, she could do nothing but mew.

CHAPTER XII

BLACKIE IS HAPPY

“WELL,” said Blackie to herself, after walking up and down the dusty porch, “I can’t get in the house, that’s sure. But I simply can’t go away from it again, even if the family has moved away. If I stay around here perhaps Arthur or Mabel will come back. They may have forgotten something, and if they do come back, and see me, they’ll take me to the new home with them. Yes, I shall stay here.

“But wait a minute. I’ll go next door and ask Speckle where my folks are. He may know.”

But alas for poor Blackie! The house next door was closed too, and Speckle was not around. And Blackie did not feel like asking the dog who lived in the other yard.

“I’ll just have to stay here,” thought Blackie. “I’ll go under the stoop where no stray dogs will see me, and there I’ll stay.”

Under the stoop of the house where she used to live crept Blackie, not exactly a lost cat any

longer, but still a cat without a home to go into.

"And I'm hungry, too," thought Blackie. "I wish I had something to eat, or some milk to drink."

Blackie stayed under the stoop all that day. Late in the afternoon she looked out, wondering where she could go to get something to eat or drink. And, as she poked out her head a milkman, driving his horse and wagon down the street, saw Blackie.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, stopping his horse. "The family that lives in that house is away, and the cat must be hungry. I have a little milk left in one of my cans. I'll give her some."

The kind milkman got out of his wagon, and with some milk in the top of one of his big cans, brought it over to Blackie. The black cat was not afraid of him, for he spoke so kindly to her.

"Here, pussy!" said the man. "Here is some milk for you. What shall I put it in? Ah, here is an empty sardine tin, that will hold it nicely." He poured the milk in the tin. Oh! how good that milk did taste to hungry and thirsty Blackie! She just purred, she was so thankful to that man.

He watched her drink the milk, and patted her on the back, even rubbing her under the ears a little, and Blackie liked that.

"If you're here to-morrow I'll give you more

milk," said the man. Blackie wished he could speak her kind of talk, so she might ask him where Mabel, Arthur and the rest of the family had gone, but she could not do that.

"Well, I feel a little better," said Blackie to herself, as she licked the milk off her whiskers with her red tongue. "I can sleep to-night I hope."

Blackie curled up under the stoop and got ready to go to sleep. It was not yet night but soon would be. Now and then Blackie heard the dog in the next yard barking, and once another dog came snooping around the stoop where the black cat was hiding. But Blackie arched up her back, made her tail big, and hissed like a snake.

"Wuff!" barked the dog, as he ran away. "Wuff! Wow!"

"Well, I learned how to scare dogs even if I can't jump fences as well as Speckle can," thought Blackie. "Now I won't be so afraid of the dog next door. Maybe I can scare him, and, if I can, life will be easier for me and Speckle, so I will have learned something by having run away and been a lost cat."

Blackie went to sleep for a while, but suddenly she was awakened by a strange sound. Some one was running up the steps over her as she lay under the porch. Then she heard voices.

"Oh, Mabel!" cried a boy. "Aren't you glad to be home again?"

"I guess so, Arthur," answered a little girl. "But it was nice in the country on our vacation. Oh, if only we had Blackie back I would be happy."

"So would I. I looked for her in the country, but I didn't see her. Look, the people next door aren't home yet."

"Wait a minute, children, and Daddy will open the door for us," said a lady's voice.

Blackie was wide awake now.

"Why—why—!" exclaimed the black cat. "The folks have come home! That is Mabel and Arthur! I wonder where they have been? Oh, how glad I am! Now I am all right."

Blackie heard the front door of the house open. Then she heard the children run inside.

"Here is where I surprise them," thought the black cat.

Out from under the stoop crawled Blackie. Up the steps she went, and in through the open front door. She could hear the children in the kitchen now, getting drinks of water, and Blackie walked toward them, hoping there was something to eat in the house.

The gas was lighted in the kitchen. Mabel and Arthur stood near the sink, drinking. The little girl was the first to spy Blackie, who walked

in, her tail held up straight like a fishing pole.

"Why—why!" cried Mabel, rubbing her eyes to make sure she was wide awake. "Why, look, Arthur! There's Blackie!"

"Blackie? Where?"

"Right here. Oh, Blackie, you've come back to us; haven't you? Oh, how glad I am!" and Mabel caught Blackie up in her arms.

"Oh, you dear Blackie!" cried Arthur, rubbing the cat on the head. "Where have you been all this while, and where did you come from? Oh, how glad I am, and happy."

"Purrr-r-r-r!" said Blackie, and that was her way of saying that she, too, was happy.

"Look, mother!" cried Mabel. "Blackie is back!"

"You don't mean it!" said the lady, "Why, isn't that strange!"

"She ran away just before we went on our summer vacation," said Arthur, "and now when we come back she is here to meet us."

Then Blackie understood. The house had been closed because the folks were away in the country for a vacation. And she had reached home the very day they came back. Wasn't Blackie a lucky cat?

Well, you can just imagine how glad Arthur and Mabel were to see Blackie. They took turns holding her and petting her, and when



Blackie walked in, her tail held up straight like a fishing pole.

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their father came in, a little later, with the bags and bundles from the train, he, too, patted Blackie.

"My, but how thin and poor Blackie has grown," said Mabel's mother. "She must have had a mighty hard time while she was on *her* vacation."

"Oh, mother! Cats don't have a vacation!" laughed Arthur.

"Well, I guess Blackie did," said the lady. "She must have had many adventures."

And Blackie had, as you can tell by this book. Of course Blackie herself could not tell about her own adventures, as she can not write or talk our language, so I have written them down for her.

Blackie was given a fine supper and then she washed herself and went to sleep on her own soft cushion again. And oh! how good it felt after her nights of sleeping under haystacks, and among boxes and barrels!

In a few days Blackie began to get fat again and soon she was like herself. She even dared get up on the fence and make faces at the dog next door, and he was so surprised at seeing how brave Blackie was that he forgot to bark.

Blackie was lonesome for Speckle, the other cat, as she wanted to tell him some of her adventures, but he was not home, nor were the people who lived in the house. But one day Blackie

heard a noise in the next yard. She heard a door in the house open.

"Oh, perhaps that is Speckle coming back!" Blackie thought.

She gave a jump, and easily went over the fence, and there, surely enough, in the yard, was Speckle.

"Why, how well you jumped that fence!" said Speckle.

"Yes, I learned that on my journey when I was lost and had so many adventures," cried Blackie.

"That's right, you did go away," said Speckle, "I had forgotten."

"Where have you been?" asked Blackie.

"Oh, off in the country on a vacation with my folks," answered the other cat. "I had a fine time, too. Did you?"

"Well, no, not all the while," Blackie answered. "But I think the trip did me good. I met Dido, a dancing bear, Tum Tum, the jolly elephant, and Flop Ear, the rabbit!"

"My! You *did* have some time!" mewed Speckle. "You must tell me about your adventures."

And Blackie did, especially about Flop Ear. And as that little chap had many things happen to him I am going to put them in a book so you may read them. It will be called: "Flop Ear, the Funny Rabbit; His Many Adventures."

"Yes, you certainly had quite a time," spoke Speckle, as Blackie finished telling him of her journey.

"And I learned how to scare dogs, too, as well as how to jump fences," said Blackie. "Come on over and I'll show you how to scare that dog next door when he barks at us."

And the two cats went up on the fence and made funny faces at the dog, which so surprised him that he crept in his kennel-house, and did not even growl.

So having brought Blackie safely home again, I will tell her good-by for all of you.

THE END

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